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ABSTRACT

Proven market/institutional research techniques and technological developments in computer systems that can be used by college admissions offices to enhance recruitment efforts are discussed in 13 articles. Titles and authors of the articles are as follows: "Student Reactions to College Recruiting Techniques" (Arthur D. Lopatin); "Research Before You Search" (Jon M. Nicholson); "Market Positioning Studies Direct Our Recruitment Message" (Thomas D. Abrahamson); "Using Volume Projections for Market Analysis" (William Turner); "Building a Recruitment Data Base with the Student Search Service" (John W. Albright, M. O. Phelps, and Claire C. Swann); "Curriculum-Specific Direct Mail: Part of the Mix" (Susan L. Sommer); "Student Search Service: Foundation for a Computerized Tracking System" (Glenn G. Carter); "Outside Consultants: Can They Help Your Direct-Mail Campaign?" (A. William Young); "Computerized Management is the Key to Successful Student Recruitment" (Larry L. Smith); "Using Phone-A-Thons: A Hotline to Enhance Your Recruitment" (Joe F. Head); "Courting Merit Scholars: 'Mizzou's' Strategy Works" (Georgeanne B. Porter and Greg D. Martin); "Building a Direct-Mail Package: Content and Format" (Kristine G. MacDermott); "Student Search Service: Is It a Public University Recruitment Tool?" (R. Thomas Snider). Questionnaires and forms are included. (SW)

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THE ADMISSIONS STRATEGIST

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STUDENT SEARCH SERVICE®

THE ADMISSIONS STRATEGIST

RECRUITING IN THE 1980s

College Entrance Examination Board
New York

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INTRODUCTION

admissions strategist: *one skilled in the act or process of admitting students based on the science of designing and implementing plans*

When used correctly, direct-mail marketing can be a powerful communications and recruitment tool. For direct mail to be effective, college admissions personnel must realize the importance of the synergy of its components. Key steps include:

- market/institutional research with prospective, current, and former students
- effective planning, incorporating diverse strategies that compliment other recruitment techniques used by colleges
- an understanding of direct-mail techniques that impact on the design of the message, letters, catalogues, and brochures for students
- an effective computer management system

Several articles in this edition of **The Admissions Strategist** explore *proven* market/institutional research techniques and technological developments in computer systems that your colleagues in admissions offices across the country are using to enhance their recruitment efforts. Other articles focus on direct-mail techniques that use outside consultants and innovative recruitment strategies such as the telephone. Interestingly enough, the Student Search Service and direct mail continue to be integral parts of the processes highlighted.

The informed college enrollment manager will use *market research* to forecast the dangers as well as the opportunities that lie ahead in the areas of recruitment goals and student retention. Articles in this edition highlight useful ways in which results from market research were used to focus the messages in letters and college recruitment publications, to determine appropriate Student Search selection parameters, and to project enrollment trends.

To keep abreast with the rapidly changing area of *computer technology,* we have included articles on the computer systems of several colleges that respond to the admissions office's operational needs and help manage the recruitment strategies used. We hope you will find the articles useful for your data management.

The Admissions Strategist was developed to enhance the communications network between you and your colleagues in the admissions field. It addresses the challenges facing today's recruitment professionals with informative, innovative articles to help you attract, enroll, and retain the best possible mix of students.

We want to stress our awareness of your everchanging roles in admissions. Today, an admissions officer must be:

- **a good personnel manager**
- **the budget manager**
- **a politician and a diplomat**
- **a computer expert**
- **the primary source for data**
- **a counselor**
- **a publications expert**
- **a research consultant**
- **a financial aid expert**
- **a direct-mail expert**

These skills and more describe the roles of an admissions strategist. Our hope is to encourage your development in these roles, and we welcome your ideas and reactions to this and other Student Search publications.

STUDENT REACTIONS TO COLLEGE RECRUITING TECHNIQUES

Arthur D. Lopatin

A declining pool of potential students and high operating costs make effective recruitment more vital than ever before. For a growing number of admissions offices, profiles generated by the College Board's Student Search Service (SSS) are the take-off point for a direct-mail campaign—the most effective medium now available—to inform prospective students about the benefits of attending their institutions.

As part of its ongoing efforts to help subscribers refine their direct-mail recruiting techniques, Search sponsors biennial surveys to find out what students who take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) think about the service and the college information they receive through it.

The most recent survey, completed in December 1983, queried a national sample of 3,000 high school juniors representing the spectrum of test scores. The survey addressed four main questions:

- How do students perceive and evaluate the Student Search Service?
- What do students do with the direct-mail materials they receive through the service?
- How satisfied are students with this information?
- Which direct-mail techniques do students appreciate most?

The volume of direct mailings that students receive from colleges varies greatly. To see if student reactions to mailings vary significantly by the amount received, the survey sample was subdivided into three groups of 1,000 each:

- **high contact by colleges**—students whose names had been reported to 30 colleges or more
- **medium contact by colleges**—students whose names had been reported to 7 to 29 colleges
- **low contact by colleges**—students whose names had been reported to fewer than 7 colleges.

A total of 2,106 completed surveys were obtained from the sample of 3,000 names, a 70 percent average response rate. Seventy-six percent of the high-contact, 70 percent of the medium-contact, and 65 percent of the low-contact students responded.*

As might be expected, there was a high positive correlation between the number of direct-mail contacts received by students and their PSAT/NMSQT scores. But a comparison of the questionnaire answers given by high-, low- and medium-ranking PSAT/NMSQT scorers yielded no statistically significant differences between the three groups. This means that the information yielded by this survey is applicable across the entire range of test takers whose scores vary. Similarly, a search for differences in answers among geographic regions yielded no statisically significant differences.

Student Awareness of SSS

An average of 85 percent of survey respondents remembered opting for inclusion in Student Search Service when they applied to take the PSAT/NMSQT. Significantly more high-contact (95 percent) than low-contact (75 percent) students had this recollection.

Student evaluation of Search was favorable across the board, with well over half the respondents indicating that they considered the service to be "very valuable." An additional two-fifths termed it "somewhat valuable." Only 5 percent or less of students said Search was "not valuable."

Student Use of SSS-Generated College Recruiting Mailings

Students study the information supplied to them via Search very carefully. This is highlighted by the fact that 95 percent of the students who were interested in attending a particular college either read all materials sent to them or scanned all materials and read some portions "carefully." Over half the respondents contacted by colleges in which they were interested claimed to have read all the materials they received. On the other hand, only 65 percent of respondents who had *not* considered attending a particular college treated these materials as attentively (see Table 1).

Admissions offices interested in fine-tuning their recruitment efforts might take note that five times as many low-contact (25 percent) as high-contact (5 percent) students read all the materials they received from colleges they had not previously considered attending. This is because students whose names have been requested relatively infrequently tend to be low PSAT/NMSQT scorers.

Only 53 percent of the students surveyed shared the college materials they received with other students, and still fewer (18 percent) gave these materials to their counselors. *If colleges want students to share direct-mail materials more widely, they will have to develop creative incentives for students to do so, or simply encourage students (after a second or third mailing) to share their materials.*

Student diligence in studying and following up on college mailings was demonstrated by the high percentage (75 percent) who said that they sometimes wrote to colleges requesting additional information. Some two-fifths (38 percent) indicated that they usually or always make such a follow-up.

* These proportions differ from the complete Search population, in which 33.1 percent of students are in the high-contact category, 24.7 percent are in the medium-contact category, and 42.2 percent are in the low-contact category.

TABLE 1.
STUDENT DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT THEY USUALLY DO WITH MATERIALS MAILED TO THEM BY COLLEGES *IN WHICH THEY ARE INTERESTED*

	Description				
Type of Student	Read All Materials %	Scan All; Read Portions Carefully %	Scan All; Do Not Read Carefully %	Do Not Read or Scan Materials %	Total % No.
High-contact students	48	47	5	0	100 757
Medium-contact students	48	46	6	0	100 692
Low-contact students	55	40	4	1	100 633
Weighted total	51	44	5	0	100 *

STUDENT DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT THEY USUALLY DO WITH MATERIALS MAILED TO THEM BY COLLEGES *THEY HAD NOT CONSIDERED ATTENDING*

	Description				
Type of Student	Read All Materials %	Scan All; Read Portions Carefully %	Scan All; Do Not Read Carefully %	Do Not Read or Scan Materials %	Total % No.
High-contact students	5	52	37	6	100 759
Medium-contact students	15	51	30	4	100 694
Low-contact students	25	47	25	3	100 632
Weighted total	15	50	31	4	100 *

TABLE 2.
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO CITED SELECTED *UNDESIRABLE* CHARACTERISTICS IN MATERIALS THEY *DISLIKE* THAT THEY RECEIVED FROM COLLEGES

	Undesirable Characteristic						
Type of Student	Too Many Materials Sent %	Hard to Understand %	Unattractive %	Not Informative %	Uninteresting %	Too Impersonal %	Did Not Contain All Needed Information %
High-contact students	10	6	28	26	29	23	32
Medium-contact students	8	9	25	25	24	19	34
Low-contact students	5	7	16	19	16	12	26
Weighted total	8	7	22	23	23	17	30

TABLE 3.
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO CITED SELECTED *DESIRABLE* CHARACTERISTICS AS BEING PRESENT IN MATERIALS THEY *LIKE* THAT THEY RECEIVED FROM COLLEGES

	Desirable Characteristic						
Type of Student	Right Amount of Materials %	Easy to Understand %	Attractive %	Informative %	Interesting %	Personalized %	Contained All Needed Information %
High-contact students	48	54	54	63	42	34	43
Medium-contact students	41	51	49	58	38	31	42
Low-contact students	33	43	35	46	30	20	33
Weighted total	40	49	45	55	37	28	39

Student Satisfaction With Direct Mail

Ninety-five percent of students surveyed thought that the direct-mail materials they got were easy to understand, and nearly 90 percent found them believable. Far fewer (59 percent) said that it was easy to find specific information in the materials sent to them, and almost a third (32 percent) said they got more information than they needed.

Many students (52 percent) thought that the way materials about colleges are prepared makes them sound alike. *Colleges that are aggressively seeking to increase their pool of potential students might consider designing materials that highlight qualities that are particularly relevant to the kinds of students they seek.* Since most students (77 percent) did not feel they got excessive information, additional materials that show an institution's unique personality would very likely be welcomed.

Colleges need to know how different characteristics of a mailing influence its effectiveness. To determine this, students were asked to specify the shortcomings in college materials they disliked. Their primary complaints were lack of sufficient information plus poor prose and graphics (see Table 2).

To make sure that these were the most important qualities, the converse question also was posed; students were asked to indicate positive characteristics of direct-mail materials they liked. Fifty-five percent mentioned informativeness, 49 percent said comprehensibility, and 45 percent said attractiveness were qualities that stood out in the mailings they liked. More than a third of the students surveyed believed that materials they liked had all of the information they needed and were written in an interesting manner. Fewer (28 percent) cited personalization as a quality that figured in materials they liked (see Table 3). Interestingly enough, when students were asked to list the names of the colleges that sent materials they liked and disliked, several of the same colleges appeared on both lists. *Clearly then, attractiveness, informativeness, and clarity of expression are vital ingredients for college mailings.*

Student Media Preferences

Ninety-six percent of survey respondents indicated that *mailings* are the preferred means of receiving college information. The second choice—school visits by college representatives—trailed by a full fifteen percentage points. At 65 percent and 66 percent respectively, visits to college campuses and college day programs in high schools also were popular ways to learn about prospective institutions. Newspaper advertisements (disliked by 37 percent of interviewees) and phone calls from colleges to students' homes (disliked by 23 percent) were the least popular approaches (see Table 4).

Students with lower PSAT/NMSQT scores were more favorably disposed than other students to being informed by newspaper and magazine ads, films, and video cassettes.

Although nearly all (97 percent) of the students have had college mailings sent to their homes, most have not experienced new informational technologies or new uses for old ones—such as films and phone-a-thons, video cassettes, and home or school computers—in college recruitment. *Until these technologies become economically viable, printed materials clearly are the most popular way to inform students about prospective colleges.*

When and how often to mail are questions that need to be answered in designing an efficient, economical recruitment campaign. Most students believed that the best time to learn about colleges is either during the sophomore year (37 percent) or during the fall of the junior year (38 percent). Eighteen percent believed that the summer between the junior and senior years is best. Just one percent thought that fall of the senior year is the best time to learn about the college choices that are available to them (see Table 5).

Students also were quizzed about how many mailings they liked to receive. While one quarter had no preference, almost twice as many (48 percent to 27 percent) preferred one mailing. High-contact students had the strongest preference (59 percent) for a single mailing, while low-contact students had the highest preference (36 percent) for multiple mailings (see Table 6).*

Preferred Context

Context, as well as timing and frequency, is important in assuring direct-mail effectiveness. Students were asked to indicate how helpful they thought the seven most generally used informational formats were and to indicate additional ways they had learned about prospective colleges. The majority (83 percent) of students found catalogues describing course requirements "very helpful." Almost all (98 percent) of the students surveyed found general information booklets with photographs "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful." Posters were termed "somewhat helpful" by 56 percent of the respondents, but "very helpful" by only 6 percent. Over one-third (38 percent) of the students said posters are "not helpful." Brief informational brochures or fact sheets without pictures were said to be "somewhat helpful" by 66 percent of the respondents, "very helpful" by 23 percent, and "not helpful" by 11 percent of those surveyed (see Table 7).

Letters to students from colleges were well received by most of the respondents. Forty-five percent of those

* This is clearly an example of a technique that individual colleges must test and measure to determine the most effective approach.

TABLE 4. RESPONSES OF DIFFERENT CONTACT GROUPS CONCERNING WHETHER THEY LIKE TO LEARN ABOUT COLLEGES IN SELECTED WAYS

Selected Way	Response: Yes %	No %	Have Not Experienced %	Total % No.
Mail sent to their home				
High-contact students	98	2	0	100 758
Medium-contact students	98	2	0	100 691
Low-contact students	91	1	8	100 645
Weighted total	96	1	3	100 *
Newspaper advertisements				
High-contact students	10	36	54	100 690
Medium-contact students	16	37	47	100 690
Low-contact students	17	37	46	100 639
Weighted total	14	37	49	100 *
College day programs in their school area				
High-contact students	65	5	30	100 757
Medium-contact students	69	4	27	100 689
Low-contact students	66	5	29	100 639
Weighted total	66	5	29	100 *
Meetings in their community with currently enrolled students				
High-contact students	34	7	59	100 758
Medium-contact students	35	8	57	100 691
Low-contact students	32	10	58	100 637
Weighted total	33	9	58	100 *
Phone calls from colleges to their home				
High-contact students	15	24	61	100 754
Medium-contact students	13	25	62	100 686
Low-contact students	19	21	60	100 642
Weighted total	16	23	61	100 *
Visits to their school by college representatives				
High-contact students	81	3	16	100 757
Medium-contact students	79	3	18	100 691
Low-contact students	81	3	16	100 641
Weighted total	81	3	16	100 *
Computer in their school				
High-contact students	33	7	60	100 757
Medium-contact students	29	8	63	100 690
Low-contact students	27	11	62	100 643
Weighted total	30	9	61	100 *
Computer in their home				
High-contact students	3	10	87	100 755
Medium-contact students	5	11	84	100 687
Low-contact students	7	16	77	100 638
Weighted total	5	12	83	100 *
Their visits to college campuses				
High-contact students	66	0	34	100 757
Medium-contact students	66	2	32	100 691
Low-contact students	64	2	34	100 643
Weighted total	65	2	33	100 *
Films				
High-contact students	28	12	60	100 757
Medium-contact students	38	15	47	100 689
Low-contact students	44	14	42	100 639
Weighted total	37	13	50	100 *
Video cassettes/records				
High-contact students	13	14	73	100 756
Medium-contact students	20	14	66	100 689
Low-contact students	21	18	61	100 640
Weighted total	18	16	66	100 *

TABLE 5. STUDENT RESPONSES CONCERNING WHEN THEY BELIEVE IS THE BEST TIME TO BEGIN LEARNING ABOUT THE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

Type of Student	Sophomore Year %	Fall of Junior Year %	Spring of Junior Year %	Summer Before Senior Year %	Fall of Senior Year %	Total % No.
High-contact students	32	42	22	3	1	100 753
Medium-contact students	31	42	17	9	1	100 685
Low-contact students	45	33	14	7	1	100 643
Weighted total	37	38	18	6	1	100 *

TABLE 6. STUDENT RESPONSES CONCERNING HOW MANY MAILINGS THEY PREFER TO RECEIVE FROM EACH COLLEGE THAT SENDS INFORMATION

	Response			
Type of Student	One Mailing %	Several Mailings %	No Preference %	Total % No.
High-contact students	55	19	26	100 758
Medium-contact students	49	24	27	100 695
Low-contact students	41	36	23	100 647
Weighted total	48	27	25	100 *

surveyed found letters "very helpful" and 47 percent found them "somwhat helpful." Fifty-three percent of the students believed copies of college newspapers are "somewhat helpful," 18 percent believed they are "very helpful"; 29 percent believed they are "not helpful." Calendars that show the college-year schedule were perceived as "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful" by 81 percent of the respondents, and "not helpful" by 19 percent of those surveyed (see Table 7).

Preferred Content

Content is at least as important as context, and students have very definite ideas about what should be included and what should be highlighted in college information. All of those surveyed believed that information about the total college cost (including tuition, room and board, etc.) should be included in the materials sent to them. More than three-fourths (80 percent) thought that this information should not only be included but should be highlighted. Ninety-nine percent believed that information about deadlines for admission and financial aid applications should be included, and 78 percent believed such information should be highlighted. Most students (65 percent) also believed that information about financial aid options should be highlighted. An additional 34 percent believed that financial aid information should be included but not highlighted (see Table 8).

Financial considerations can be decisive in student decision making. Nearly half of those surveyed (47 percent) said they would reconsider attending a college they had decided not to attend if they received a scholarship offer. An additional 45 percent said they would attend if a sufficient amount were offered. Thus, *although communicating an institution's unique academic environment and institutional ethos is a necessity, information about financial aid opportunities is likely to be one of the most crucial kinds of information that students receive. Therefore, colleges might consider highlighting information about financial aid opportunities in a way that insures that students who are only scanning the materials will see it.*

Preferred Visual Approaches

The communicative power of effectively organized, informative, and well written college recruitment materials is enhanced when they are visually appealing and psychologically attractive. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents preferred brochures that contain color rather than black-and-white photographs. Seventy-four percent preferred personalized letters addressed to them by name rather than letters sent to "Dear Student." More than 50 percent of the respondents preferred longer letters that contain both general and specific information and materials with drawings, graphics, photographs, etc. Many students preferred letters, signed by the head of the department or the dean of admissions, offering the major field in which they are interested. Sixty-four percent of the survey group preferred a longer letter containing both general and specific information, while only 23 percent preferred a short, specific letter. Nearly half (48 percent) of the respondents preferred an entertain-

TABLE 7. RESPONSES OF DIFFERENT CONTACT GROUPS CONCERNING HOW HELPFUL SELECTED PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS ARE TO THEM

Selected Promotional Material	Response: Very Helpful %	Somewhat Helpful %	Not Helpful %	Total %	No.
Posters					
High-contact students	4	51	45	100	754
Medium-contact students	6	57	37	100	690
Low-contact students	8	60	32	100	633
Weighted total	6	56	38	100	*
Catalogs describing course requirements					
High-contact students	80	19	1	100	756
Medium-contact students	83	16	1	100	694
Low-contact students	86	14	0	100	638
Weighted total	83	16	1	100	*
General information booklet with photographs					
High-contact students	53	44	3	100	757
Medium-contact students	57	40	3	100	693
Low-contact students	61	37	2	100	637
Weighted total	57	41	2	100	*
Brief informational brochures or fact sheets with no pictures					
High-contact students	24	65	11	100	754
Medium-contact students	24	62	14	100	692
Low-contact students	22	68	10	100	637
Weighted total	23	66	11	100	*
Letters sent to prospective students from college					
High-contact students	33	55	12	100	756
Medium-contact students	44	49	7	100	694
Low-contact students	56	40	4	100	635
Weighted total	45	47	8	100	*
Copies of college newspapers sent to prospective students					
High-contact students	17	50	33	100	750
Medium-contact students	17	55	28	100	684
Low-contact students	19	55	26	100	630
Weighted total	18	53	29	100	*
Calendar showing the schedule of the college year					
High-contact students	28	54	18	100	753
Medium-contact students	28	51	21	100	687
Low-contact students	30	50	20	100	634
Weighted total	29	52	19	100	*

TABLE 8. RESPONSES OF DIFFERENT CONTACT GROUPS CONCERNING THE EMPHASIS THAT SHOULD BE PLACED ON SELECTED TYPES OF INFORMATION IN PRINTED MATERIALS

Type of Information	Response: Should Be Highlighted %	Should Be Included But Not Highlighted %	Should Not Be Included %	Total % No.
Total cost including tuition, room, board, etc.				
High-contact students	78	22	0	100 757
Medium-contact students	80	20	0	100 694
Low-contact students	81	19	0	100 645
Weighted total	80	20	0	100 *
Deadlines for admission application, financial aid application, etc.				
High-contact students	75	25	0	100 758
Medium-contact students	78	21	1	100 693
Low-contact students	82	17	1	100 646
Weighted total	78	21	1	100 *
Majors available				
High-contact students	79	21	0	100 758
Medium-contact students	76	24	0	100 695
Low-contact students	74	26	0	100 646
Weighted total	76	24	0	100 *
Entrance requirements				
High-contact students	76	24	0	100 757
Medium-contact students	78	22	0	100 694
Low-contact students	83	16	1	100 645
Weighted total	79	21	0	100 *
Description of college environment				
High-contact students	28	71	1	100 758
Medium-contact students	25	74	1	100 694
Low-contact students	23	73	4	100 646
Weighted total	26	72	2	100 **
Distance from home				
High-contact students	8	66	26	100 756
Medium-contact students	7	62	31	100 695
Low-contact students	9	63	28	100 644
Weighted total	8	64	28	100 *
Information on financial aid available				
High-contact students	63	36	1	100 755
Medium-contact students	63	36	1	100 695
Low-contact students	67	32	1	100 646
Weighted total	65	34	1	100 *
Description of extracurricular activities available				
High-contact students	26	72	2	100 756
Medium-contact students	26	71	3	100 694
Low-contact students	29	69	2	100 645
Weighted total	27	71	2	100 *
Description of students who attend the college				
High-contact students	13	66	21	100 755
Medium-contact students	11	61	28	100 693
Low-contact students	10	57	33	100 643
Weighted total	11	61	28	100 *
Availability of on-campus housing				
High-contact students	35	62	3	100 757
Medium-contact students	39	59	2	100 694
Low-contact students	43	54	3	100 644
Weighted total	39	58	3	100 *
Description of social life on campus				
High-contact students	23	69	8	100 758
Medium-contact students	22	65	13	100 693
Low-contact students	22	64	14	100 644
Weighted total	23	66	11	100 *

TABLE 9. STUDENT PREFERENCES FOR SELECTED TYPES OF COLLEGE MATERIAL FORMATS

Selected Format	Type of Student: High-Contact %	Medium-Contact %	Low-Contact %	Weighted Total %
White stationery	19	15	17	17
Colored stationery	20	23	23	22
No preference	61	62	60	61
Total	100	100	100	100
Materials with photographs of campus buildings	47	52	52	51
Materials with photographs of students on campus	32	30	29	30
Materials without photographs	3	3	3	3
No preference	18	15	16	16
Total	100	100	100	100
Letter addressed to "Dear Student"	4	3	6	4
Letter addressed to "Dear (name)"	77	77	69	74
No preference	19	20	25	22
Total	100	100	100	100
Letter signed by president of college	6	10	12	9
Letter signed by dean of admissions	16	17	14	15
Letter signed by head of department in which student is interested	27	25	27	27
No preference	51	48	47	49
Total	100	100	100	100
Long letter containing both general and specific information	60	64	67	64
Short letter containing only specific information	26	23	21	23
No preference	14	13	12	13
Total	100	100	100	100
Materials printed in black and white	20	21	25	23
Materials printed in color	38	37	32	35
No preference	42	42	43	42
Total	100	100	100	100
Materials mostly with printed words	20	23	22	22
Materials with drawings, graphics, photographs, etc.	62	57	59	59
No preference	18	20	19	19
Total	100	100	100	100
Formal letter with general information about college	27	30	38	32
Entertaining letter with general information about college	52	50	43	48
No preference	21	20	19	20
Total	100	100	100	100
Materials mailed with second-class, third-class, or bulk-rate postage	4	4	3	4
Materials mailed with first-class postage	25	30	33	29
No preference	71	66	64	67
Total	100	100	100	100
Brochures with black-and-white photographs	1	1	2	1
Brochures with color photographs	80	79	72	77
No preference	19	20	26	22
Total	100	100	100	100

ingly written letter to a more formally worded one. Well over half of those queried (61 percent and 67 percent, respectively) had no preference for colored over white stationery and first-class over second- or third-class postage (see Table 9).

The key word here is *preferred*. A college must find out if the student's preferences are met and if that student then applies for admission, to determine the effectiveness of the direct mailing.

General Recommendations for Further Study

Although recruitment strategies undoubtedly will vary according to institutional needs, several generally applicable conclusions emerge from this study that individual colleges may wish to explore:

- Colleges that wish to maximize the success of their recruitment efforts should continue to use direct mail to distribute college catalogues and general information booklets containing photographs to prospective students. This technique may be evaluated in context with other recruitment techniques.
- Colleges should be sure to highlight information regarding costs, deadlines, majors, entrance requirements and, last but not least, financial aid opportunities. Taking their current viewbook, a college might experiment with various ways to position such information.

Colleges also should use an attractive format for their direct mail materials. Typically, this should include:

- Letters on either white or colored stationery signed by the head of the department in which a student is most interested, or by the dean of admissions or the college president. Evaluate both approaches. Your college's experience may vary from that of the sample.
- Use of a somewhat longer cover letter, written in an entertaining and not overly formal style, that contains some general as well as specific information. Again, we stress the need to test the effectiveness of the suggested approach.
- Brochures that contain color photographs, drawings, and other graphic displays, and that do not rely solely on text and avoid wordiness. These suggestions were made by the students surveyed.

Because the sample chosen for this survey—the first of its kind conducted on behalf of the College Board to focus on direct mail—was broadly representative, the above recommendations are generally applicable. But it is important for each college to conduct its own direct-mail research to determine the most effective approaches for the particular academic, geographic, and ethnic mix of students it serves.

The Student Search Service hopes that the findings presented suggest significant questions for each college to consider as it researches successful direct-mail recruitment techniques. Your investigations may uncover significant information that will lead to more successful recruitment programs.

About the Author

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RESEARCH BEFORE YOU SEARCH

Jon M. Nicholson

What academic majors need more exposure?
What parts of the country should we mail to?
What kinds of students do we need to attract?
Who are our competitors?
What kinds of information should we send?
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
SUMMARY REPORT

When the applications fall off or the yield begins to decline, the impulse for those of us who use the Student Search Service is to frantically increase the number of students we are searching. For those who have not yet used the Search, the response may be to dive into it feet first and get materials into the mailboxes of as many 18-year-olds as possible. Is this an effective way to increase student applications? Hardly. An increase of mass mailings may seem the right thing to do at the time, but it isn't. A carefully focused, well planned increase in Search mailings, or for first-time users a carefully conceived Search strategy based on more than a cursory analysis of the market, is more efficient and less expensive and probably will be more effective in the long run.

Market Research Options

There isn't an admissions director today who hasn't heard of market research. Some have dabbled at it themselves, and more and more have had some formal training in marketing, with varying results. Others have launched into all-out expensive and time-consuming projects in which the ends may not justify the means. Some have engaged professional consultants, often at the direction of their presidents. The lucky ones have on their campuses an office of institutional research with a director who already has taken an interest in population and enrollment trends, migration patterns, attrition/retention studies, and the effects of various recruitment practices.

Those who aren't blessed with such a resource must do one of three things: plunge ahead to plan a recruitment strategy based on previous years' experience and luck; secure the services of "outside" experts, either colleagues or professional consultants; or begin from scratch to build an information-gathering network on campus.

The first option is likely to work only for those institutions with already limited appeal—in a geographic or curricular sense—where one concentrates his or her efforts within the market boundaries. Some examples are county or state junior or community colleges, schools of agriculture, and schools of engineering or nursing.

The second option—securing outside experts—has both good and bad points. Among the advantages:

- Your advice is coming from *professional* colleagues or marketing specialists who know their business.
- Someone is looking at existing problems, some of which even you haven't recognized, with a fresh pair of eyes.
- Even though your consultants may not tell you (and your president) anything you don't already know (and haven't already told him or her), opinions coming from a neutral outside expert will carry considerable weight and may of itself be enough to get you the human, financial, and technical resources you need to get the job done.

Among the disadvantages:

- No outsider can get to know your institution in a few days. If your consultant is a colleague from an institution much like yours, the colleague won't have as much to learn about your institution, but he or she may not be willing to share good ideas either.
- Your institution can expect to spend up to $500 per day (and in a few cases more) per person, plus expenses, for a report that may not tell you or your president anything you don't already know.
- There is always a nagging suspicion that the consultant may be more interested in the fee than in helping you solve your problems, and that the consultant may tell you not much more than what you have directly or indirectly told him or her you want to be told.
- You may not agree with your consultant's recommendations. After your institution has spent the money to get those recommendations, you'd better be prepared to agree and to implement the suggestions.

Now, if you choose to begin from scratch, or if that is your only option, and you hope to solve your problems from within, where do you begin and with whom?

Building an Information-Gathering Network

One way to begin is by picking the brains of your constituents. Talk individually or in small groups with your financial aid officer, the dean of the faculty, members of the dean of students' staff, your chief fiscal officer, some selected faculty members, and most importantly groups of your own students. If you have a director of institutional research, by all means conscript him or her from the beginning. Plan to bring the most helpful of these people together for a half- or full-day discussion away from telephones and other distractions. It is very important that your institution's senior staff members understand your problems and are invited to help find solutions.

The chances are you will eventually be asking for more resources—additional staff, an increased financial aid budget, etc. You will need your senior colleagues' support as you compete with other requests for increased allocations from a finite institutional budget.

Don't make the group too large or it will quickly become unwieldy and caught up in long, drawn-out discussions. Draft people who will ask tough questions and can, if the need arises, make tough decisions; but avoid those who tend to become bogged down in detail or who have axes to grind.

Even if you get the best people on your campus, don't expect ready agreement or quick fixes. Plan to meet several times over the course of a semester or quarter. Structure the meetings carefully and, though you can be flexible and allow meaningful discussions to go on longer

than anticipated, stick to your agenda. You are the professional, you are the leader, and you can surely tell when a subject has been exhausted or when the group goes off on a tangent. It will take much of your time and effort to do this and do it right. It *will* be worth it.

What are your institution's strong points? Why do people come there? You may need to meet with a number of faculty members or to survey them. Why did they come and why do they stay? Find out from your students why *they* came, what they like about the place, what they don't like. Are you getting the "right" students? Take a close look at your attrition rate. Your dean of students can take the lead here. Why do people transfer? Where do they go when they transfer? Do they stay? Once you find out what your students and faculty think are your institution's strong points, you're well on the way to launching an effective marketing campaign.

Survey Your Students

What were your students' preconceptions about your college? What pleasantly surprised them after they got there? What didn't they know but should have been told before they came? Before they applied? Is there anything misleading in your literature? What isn't said that needs to be said? What needs special emphasis? How do they react to the layout, color, design?

Carleton used a randomly selected group of freshmen and asked them to respond to such questions in a somewhat extensive questionnaire (estimated to require 30-60 minutes to complete carefully). Then we asked them to come to one of two 1½ hour meetings to discuss what they had told us; to tell us what other institutions' recruiting techniques had impressed them, favorably or unfavorably; and to expand on their written responses.

The next step is to survey the students who were admitted, but who declined your offer of admission in order to matriculate elsewhere. Obviously, what you want to find out is *why*. Did these students have all the information they needed about your school? Did most of the financial aid applicants receive better packages elsewhere? How many had unsatisfactory campus visits? Did most of them not visit? Might a good visit have made a difference?

Now, you need to determine why so many students in your prospect files never submitted an application for admission. This will involve a phone or mail survey, using a carefully prepared set of questions.

One institution developed a sophisticated questionnaire and surveyed 4,000 prospects who did not submit applications in the summer of the year they planned to enter college. *Prospects* were defined as persons who had at some point taken some overt action to request admissions information. These students were selected randomly from five geographic regions of particular interest and concern to the admissions staff. Overall findings based on a 27 percent response showed, for example, several reasons given for not submitting an application to that institution (see table).

Analysis of this kind of data may reveal that you are not providing those prospects with the right kinds of information and/or enough information about your institution.

Important Questions for Market Research

Basic market research means providing answers to three very important questions:

Who do we search?

- What parameters should we set—geographic, academic criteria, self-reported probable majors? (If you're using the PSAT Search, remember that these students are responding to those questions in October of their junior year.)
- Should we stop mailings to parts of the country where we never seem to get much response?
- Does it make sense to search students with selection scores above 1200? Everybody does, but those students tend to gravitate toward a certain set of institutions. How can we attract their attention?

STUDENTS' REASONS FOR NOT APPLYING TO A PARTICULAR INSTITUTION

Type of Reason	Percent*	Number
Location	45	465
Cost	32	302
Course offerings	20	188
Academics	16	146
Size	9	85
Lack of interest	8	71
Social atmosphere	6	59
Weather	5	49
Other	11	110

* Percent of respondents listing each item. Because up to three responses were permitted, the total exceeds 100 percent.

- Does it make sense to mail to students supposedly bent on going into engineering when your institution is strictly a liberal arts college?
- Should we segment our Search activity?

What do we send them?

- Have you been sending materials that tell students the kinds of things they need to know?
- Which college brochures caught your students' attention and made them want to do more than quickly skim through? Don't copy another college's layout, but you certainly can take someone else's good idea and tailor it to fit your own needs.

How do we follow up?

- What have your students told you about school visits? College nights?
- If you participated in the early PSAT Search, can you wait until mid-to-late summer to plan your fall travel schedule?
- How do your students feel about phone calls from the admissions staff, from faculty members, from an alumni representative?
- How can you most efficiently and effectively use faculty?

After your on-campus sounding board makes many suggestions and you also have much better information with which to make decisions, now it is time to do what has to be done. This might include a dramatic change in who, how, and when you search and what you send. Your publication might need a major overhaul. You might want to do several different Searches at one time or at different times. The chances are that whatever you do will cost more than you are currently spending. What, if anything, can you stop doing? Finally, if you need to go to your president with a request for more money, people, and/or equipment, you should have the ammunition you need to make a good case for those requests. The better prepared you are and the broader and stronger your base of support within your college community, the more likely you will get what you need.

About the Author

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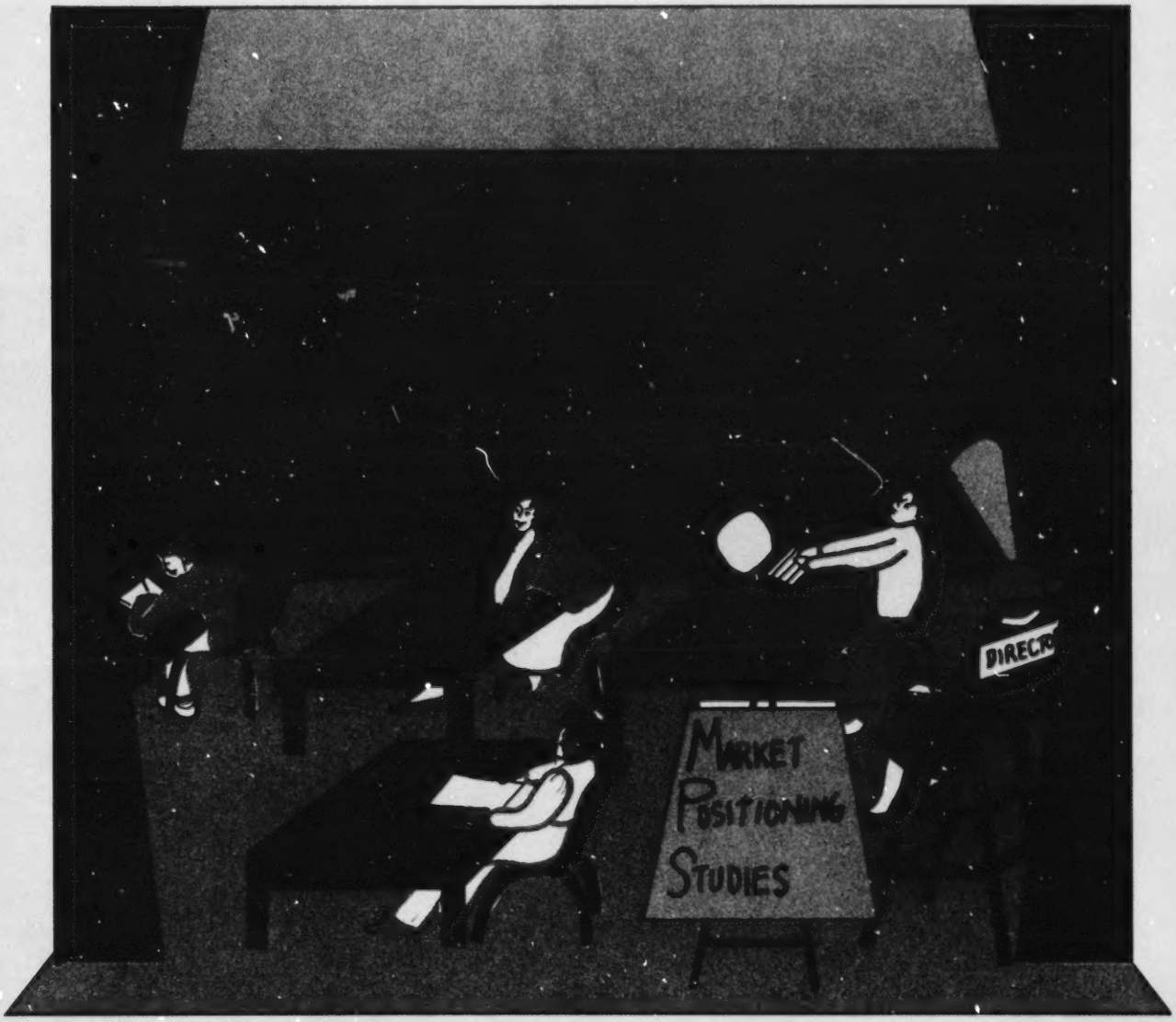
MARKET POSITIONING STUDIES DIRECT OUR RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

Thomas D. Abrahamson



Pervasive to every aspect of the admissions program at Trinity University is the use of research in its many forms. During the past few years, we have initiated an extensive program of integrating research into the planning of Student Search. With most factors remaining constant, we are certain that research has been a contributing factor to the response rate of search, which in four years has climbed from 2.5 percent to more than 21 percent recorded this year.

The research that is relevant to Student Search serves two purposes: as an aid for ordering the list of names, and to help create the messages within communications that will be sent to students. A great deal of research is gathered for the initial ordering of Search names from the College Board. This research includes analysis of enrollment trends, previous Student Search results, and a variety of demographic data. This article, however, concentrates on the research we conduct to form the messages presented to selected Search participants. Specifically, our admissions office directs a comprehensive market positioning research study that provides needed information to focus the messages and content of letters and brochures sent to Search participants.

Positioning

College positioning is defined as a process whereby an organization conducts formal research to find out what a prospective student knows about its institution and competitors' institutions. Based on this knowledge, the organization can determine what "position" it occupies in the prospective student's mind regarding the college's comparative attributes; it then may communicate the perceived differences between the institutions through the organization's promotional efforts. The following is an overview of our market positioning study and how several of its results were directly translated into a finished product—the "positioning" Search brochure.

Trinity's Market Positioning Questionnaire (MPQ)

In the spring semester, Trinity's admissions office sends 100 percent of accepted applicants the highly detailed market positioning questionnaire, which has three basic parts (see pages 18-21).

Part one concerns information sources and lists all major channels wherein a student can find out about Trinity University. This section requires the student to rate the manner in which information sources affected his or her perception of Trinity in a continuum ranging from "very positive" to "very negative," as well as "no information from this source." When analyzed, these ratings reveal the influence of each information channel. The rating "no information from this source" indicates the efficiency of each information source when percentages of response are examined and reversed (e.g., 15 percent "no information" tells us that 85 percent did have a contact with that information channel). Part one also explores the time-relationship of the information channels by asking the student to "indicate the number of the information source that first called your attention to Trinity." Results gleaned from part one help prioritize admissions activities and make budgetary decisions. The 1983 study shows that Student Search was rated "first contact" source, which confirmed our feeling that Search was an important and effective program.

Part two of the market positioning questionnaire displays 37 universal college attributes and asks the student to rate Trinity and two other named colleges that the student has been accepted into and is considering attending. The scale ranges from very good to poor as well as "DK" ("don't know enough about the attribute to rate"). A fourth column asks the student to rate the importance of each attribute in his or her college decision process. Thorough analysis of the information in part two provides answers to virtually hundreds of admissions research questions. At the bottom of part two, the student again reviews the college attributes and selects three that are unique about Trinity in comparison to the other two colleges. Of the three sections in the MPQ, part two proved to be the most meaningful to the design of the Search brochure.

Part three of the questionnaire elicits additional information about our college competition, the timing of the admissions process, financial aid, and scholarships, and includes three open-ended questions. Most important to the Student Search brochure were the open-ended questions, which explored the students' perceptions of college admissions and allowed a basis for understanding some of the psychological needs of prospective students. Thousands of comments were reviewed and categorized according to students' needs. Some of the major findings that emerged from their self-disclosure in this section were in the areas of treatment as prospective students, expectations of the admissions office, what was liked and disliked about the process, and which factors made a positive difference for students in their associations with admissions offices. The answers to the open-ended questions helped formulate the overall tone of the brochure. Figure 1 (page 22) illustrates how one identified psychological need was addressed: the strong desire to be challenged. Thus, the opening statement on the cover of the brochure. Following are highlights of several other questionnaire findings that were highly relevant to the design of the Search brochure.

Trinity's Competition

Trinity's top twenty competitors were identified as a result of the students' naming exercise in parts two and

PART ONE:
INFORMATION SOURCES

Please tell us in what manner each source affected your perception of Trinity University.

	VERY POSITIVE	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE	VERY NEGATIVE	NO INFORMATION FROM THIS SOURCE
1. "Student Search Service" mailing	1	2	3	4	5	x
2. Information Bulletin: "Trinity of Texas"	1	2	3	4	5	x
3. Trinity Monthly Calendar	1	2	3	4	5	x
4. Newsletter: "Trinity Times"	1	2	3	4	5	x
5. Trinity academic department fact sheets	1	2	3	4	5	x
6. "President's Scholar" information sheet	1	2	3	4	5	x
7. "National Merit" information sheet	1	2	3	4	5	x
8. Scholarship/Financial Aid pamphlet	1	2	3	4	5	x
9. Visit to the Trinity campus	1	2	3	4	5	x
10. Student guided tour of campus	1	2	3	4	5	x
11. Visit with faculty member	1	2	3	4	5	x
12. Observing a class	1	2	3	4	5	x
13. Overnight stay on campus	1	2	3	4	5	x
14. Other visit activity (please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	x
15. Phone calls from Trinity	1	2	3	4	5	x
16. Call from Trinity student	1	2	3	4	5	x
17. Call from Trinity admissions counselor	1	2	3	4	5	x
18. Call from Trinity faculty member	1	2	3	4	5	x
19. Talk with your high school counselor	1	2	3	4	5	x
20. Talk with a teacher at your high school	1	2	3	4	5	x
21. Contact at your church	1	2	3	4	5	x
22. Contact with Trinity Alumni Representative	1	2	3	4	5	x
23. Trinity scholarship poster at your high school	1	2	3	4	5	x
24. Trinity Choir during National Tour	1	2	3	4	5	x
25. Talk with Trinity admissions counselor	1	2	3	4	5	x
26. On the Trinity campus	1	2	3	4	5	x
27. During a high school visit	1	2	3	4	5	x
28. During a high school college day/night	1	2	3	4	5	x
29. At a national college fair	1	2	3	4	5	x
30. Trinity Admissions Presentation (seminar) in your city	1	2	3	4	5	x
31. Trinity Alumni friend, relative or acquaintance	1	2	3	4	5	x
32. Friends	1	2	3	4	5	x
33. Father	1	2	3	4	5	x
34. Mother	1	2	3	4	5	x
35. Other family members	1	2	3	4	5	x
36. Talk with a friend who is presently a Trinity student	1	2	3	4	5	x
37. LRN slide-tape presentation at your high school	1	2	3	4	5	x
38. Newspaper/magazine article about Trinity	1	2	3	4	5	x
39. Other (specify and rate) _____	1	2	3	4	5	x
40. College comparison guide (e.g. *The College Handbook*) name & rate _____	1	2	3	4	5	x

A. Indicate the number of the information source which first called your attention to Trinity. Source #_____

B. Which of the above information sources was the single most important factor in your decision to APPLY to Trinity University? Source #_____

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PART THREE

I. List all colleges/universities to which you applied. Then in each box to the right of the college, enter a 1 if you were accepted and a 2 if you were not.

College/University	Were you accepted? 1 = yes 2 = no	College/University	Were you accepted? 1 = yes 2 = no

II. Please use the following scale to respond to questions [A] and [B]:

1) Prior to freshman year in high school
2) Freshman year
3) Sophomore year
4) Summer between sophomore and junior years
5) Fall of junior year
6) Spring of junior year
7) Summer between junior and senior years
8) Fall of senior year

[A] When did you first hear of Trinity? #_____

[B] When did you first become interested in applying to Trinity? #_____

III. Were you offered financial aid or scholarships at another college?
Yes_____ No_____ (If no, skip to IV.)

If yes, list the name of the college and the amount of the award.

College	Academic Scholarship $	Need-Based $

IV. Please provide short answers to the following:

A. What are the first words that come to mind when describing Trinity University? _____

B. In general terms, what are some ways admissions offices can better serve their prospective students? _____

C. Any additional comments regarding college admissions or the Trinity University Admissions Office are appreciated.

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PART TWO: COLLEGE/UNI

WE WISH TO LEARN MCHE ABOUT HOW YOU VIEW THE CHARACTE
UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED TO AND ARE CONSIDERING
CORRECT RESPONSE. IF YOU DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT AN ITEM TO
UNIVERSITY RATED IN [B] AND [C]. IN THE FOURTH COLUMN, ON THE FAR
DECISION PROCESS.
NOTE: IN THE EVENT THAT TRINITY WAS THE ONLY UNIVERSITY YOU APPL

NAME: _____

	[A] TRINITY U.					
	VERY GOOD	GOOD	POOR	DON'T KNOW	VERY GOOD	GOOD
1. Dorm facilities	1	2	3	x	1	2
2. Male to female ratio	1	2	3	x	1	2
3. Quality of academics	1	2	3	x	1	2
4. Overall treatment as a prospective student	1	2	3	x	1	2
5. Distance from home	1	2	3	x	1	2
6. Reputation of alumni	1	2	3	x	1	2
7. Variety of courses	1	2	3	x	1	2
8. Honors Program	1	2	3	x	1	2
9. High school counselor's rating	1	2	3	x	1	2
10. Intramurals	1	2	3	x	1	2
11. Average class size	1	2	3	x	1	2
12. Emphasis on undergraduate education	1	2	3	x	1	2
13. Extracurricular opportunities	1	2	3	x	1	2
14. Personal attention given to students	1	2	3	x	1	2
15. Equipment/facilities/computers/labs, etc.	1	2	3	x	1	2
16. Availability of financial aid	1	2	3	x	1	2
17. Availability of academic scholarships	1	2	3	x	1	2
18. Career guidance/job placement services	1	2	3	x	1	2
19. General reputation	1	2	3	x	1	2
20. Quality of faculty	1	2	3	x	1	2
21. Cost	1	2	3	x	1	2
22. Social atmosphere	1	2	3	x	1	2
23. Endowment of the institution	1	2	3	x	1	2
24. Offerings within the city/town	1	2	3	x	1	2
25. Fraternity/sorority life	1	2	3	x	1	2
26. Student to faculty ratio	1	2	3	x	1	2
27. Geographical distribution of student body	1	2	3	x	1	2
28. Size of enrollment	1	2	3	x	1	2
29. Special events, lecturers, entertainment	1	2	3	x	1	2
30. Diversity of the student body	1	2	3	x	1	2
31. Quality of intended major (specify and rate) _____	1	2	3	x	1	2
_____	1	2	3	x	1	2
32. Quality of library	1	2	3	x	1	2
33. The application process	1	2	3	x	1	2
34. Intercollegiate athletic programs	1	2	3	x	1	2
35. Selectivity of admissions	1	2	3	x	1	2
36. Appearance of college campus	1	2	3	x	1	2
37. Attitude of students	1	2	3	x	1	2
38. Other _____	1	2	3	x	1	2

A. PLEASE LOOK OVER THE ABOVE CHARACTERISTICS AND DETERMINE WHICH THREE ARE UNIQUE ABOUT TRINITY WHEN COMPARED TO COLLE

B. OF THE THREE COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES RATED IN PART ONE, PLEASE INDICATE (BY LETTER) WHICH IS YOUR FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD CHOI

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VERSITY CHARACTERISTICS

RISTICS OF TRINITY UNIVERSITY IN COMPARISON TO OTHER COLLEGES/-
ATTENDING. PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION BY CIRCLING THE MOST
NATE IT, CIRCLE "DON'T KNOW". WRITE OUT THE NAME OF THE COLLEGE OR
RIGHT, PLEASE INDICATE HOW IMPORTANT EACH ITEM IS IN YOUR COLLEGE

IED TO PLEASE COMPLETE COLUMN A ONLY.

B

C

NAME:

POOR	DON'T KNOW	VERY GOOD	GOOD	POOR	DON'T KNOW	HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS TO YOU? VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
3	x	1	2	3	x	1	2	3

PORTION OF TRINITY UNIVERSITY'S RECRUITMENT BROCHURE

In Texas, there's a private university that requires its students to be bright, creative, curious, and to have many interests. And that's just to get in.

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

Quietly building a solid reputation for 115 years, this university prepares its graduates to compete for careers in the 1990's and beyond.

Our curriculum is structured to provide an educational foundation suitable for a variety of career specializations. Degrees are awarded in 46 major fields and interdisciplinary programs. Pre-professional programs are offered in medicine, dentistry, religious vocations, and law. Fortune 500 companies such as IBM, Texaco, and Arthur Young recruit regularly on campus.

Major fields of study include: art; biology; biophysics; business administration; chemistry; computing and information sciences; economics; education; engineering science; English; environmental studies; foreign languages; geology; health/physical education/athletics; history; international and comparative studies; journalism/radio/television; mathematics; music; philosophy; physics; political science; psychology; religion; sociology; speech and drama; urban studies.

three. This helped us form our competitive application set of colleges. We assumed that this group may or may not be the same schools competing at the time of Student Search. Therefore, an additional set of colleges considered to be the "Student Search competitive set" was identified by contacting students on our Search list and asking them which colleges had contacted them. Additional investigation about these competitors helped structure messages contained within the Search brochure.

Important College Attributes

A ranking of college attributes in order of importance to the applicant was developed from the data of part two. The question, "How important is this to you?" helped us assign priorities to the issues that were to be presented in the brochure. This knowledge was directly translated into decisions about what would and would not be included in the brochure and how much space (column/line inches) was to be allocated to each issue. Figure 2 (page 22) is a page from the brochure that illustrates diminishing type-setting point size, as dictated by the importance of the students' needs.

Trinity's Unique Attributes

Question 4 in part two of the questionnaire enables a ranking of the attributes according to their uniqueness when compared to the competition. Unique factors presented plausible positioning opportunities when these factors also were considered important to the students.

Positioning Opportunities

Through a process of combining a number of analyses, extracted from MPQ data, positioning opportunities were identified and reinforced in the brochure. The following formulas were applied:

A

Attribute of high importance
\+ Better rating for Trinity than competitor
\+ Reinforcement of good perceptions
= *Positioning opportunities*

B

Attribute of high importance
\+ Equal or lesser rating than competitor
\+ Effort to increase awareness of poor attribute
= *Positioning opportunities*

C

Attribute that is unique to Trinity
\+ High importance
\+ Reinforcement of unique perception
= *Positioning opportunities*

Breakthrough Opportunities

The most rewarding outcome of the study was the discernment of positioning "breakthrough opportunities," which were considered to be the most powerful differentiating positioning opportunities. The following formula was used to recognize these opportunities:

Attribute of high importance
\+ Unique to Trinity when compared to competition
\+ Low awareness of Trinity and competitor (high "DK" ratings)
\+ Radical enhancement of awareness level for the Trinity attribute
= *Positioning breakthrough opportunities*

Conclusion

One cannot underestimate the value of objective research in the highly subjective realm of the college admissions officer. It is essential that we do not rely entirely on our professional judgments, as they may be very different from those of our student clientele due to age, values, and other perceptual differences between us. If you are an institution like Trinity, which is changing rapidly, research of this type can keep you abreast of the continually shifting perceptions of university attributes and priorities of the prospective college student. At Trinity, we have found a direct correlation between the amount of time spent planning strategy of the Search campaign and the quantity and quality of results.

Reflect on your own Search campaign and ask yourself three key questions:

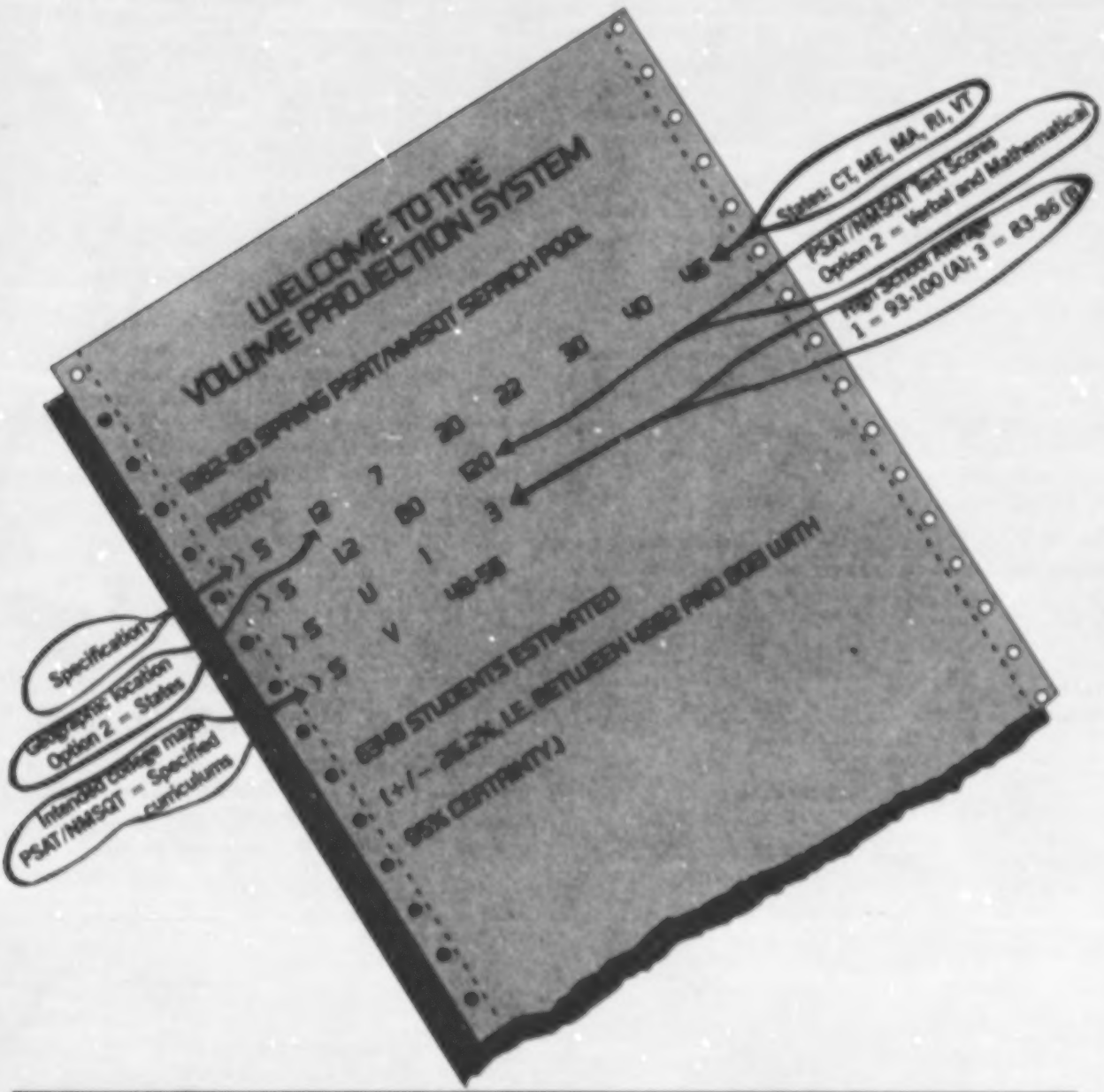
1. Have you developed a list of students composed of 100 percent potentially good matches for your institution?
2. Are you addressing students' important needs for information about your university presented in accordance to how they currently perceive you?
3. Are you stressing the strong features of your institution that your competitors do not possess?

When you have successfully answered these questions, I believe you will have the basis for an effective Student Search campaign. Best of all, if you use solid market positioning research to authoritatively answer these questions, you will have valuable new help in writing your Student Search brochure.

About the Author
Thomas D. Abrahamson is Assistant Director of Admissions at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas, where he is responsible for marketing research and direct-mail programs. He is Membership Chairman of the Texas Association of College Admissions Counselors. In addition, Mr. Abrahamson has been marketing consultant to many San Antonio area small businesses.

USING VOLUME PROJECTIONS FOR MARKET ANALYSIS

William Turner



Understanding the natural and potential markets of a college or university is absolutely fundamental to the development of sound recruitment strategies. This point has been made over and over again in the literature of higher education admissions. While population data are readily available from most state departments of education, or from other government and educational agencies, more detailed trends describing student attendance patterns and preference patterns are difficult for many institutions to obtain. Some institutions have undertaken expensive market research surveys that provide important marketing information. However, for many institutions such endeavors are not readily possible.

The Student Search Service of the College Board provides an excellent opportunity for an institution to develop a more sensitive appreciation for its natural or potential markets. Over the last ten years, between 1 and 1.5 million high school sophomores and juniors have taken the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). The number of students taking the PSAT has tracked very closely by year the national college-bound population. Hence, important trend data are available to colleges willing to make the effort to retain historical data from the Student Search Service. This data can be important in market definition, not only as one plans to conduct a Search, but also as one attempts to achieve an understanding of the market available to a given institution.

Population projections are well established through the end of this century. The traditional college-age population of 18- to 24-year-olds reached a peak of over 29 million in 1980. However, by 1990 it is estimated that this age group will diminish to about 25 million. Given such dramatic shifts, it is important for institutional administrators to monitor their own market environment carefully in order to develop rational enrollment goals, institutional goals, and sensitive marketing strategies.

Volume Projection Service

The College Board staff will assist a Search user in planning and setting specifications for Searches through the Volume Projection Service. Each College Board regional office has direct access, via computer terminals, to data samples describing students who take the PSAT/NMSQT and the SAT.

Two types of student pools are available through the Volume Projection Service: the Summary Reporting Service pools and the Student Search Service pools.

The Summary Reporting Service (SRS) data are valuable for enrollment planning, because they include all high school seniors who have taken the SAT. If an institution uses SRS pools for several consecutive years, it can identify trends in such areas as student curriculum choices and proportions of various groups in the college-bound population. Volume projections for the years 1985 and 1988, based on the number of college-bound seniors expected in those years, may be requested.

The Student Search Service pools describe students in each of the five searches and give close estimates of how many students have the qualifications an institution is considering for its searches. For example, a school might be interested in junior students in the Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search pool who live in New England, have high school averages of A-B, have combined PSAT/NMSQT-verbal and -mathematical scores between 80 and 120, and plan to major in the health and medical professions.

These estimates will help establish specific actions—or change them—to obtain the approximate number of students an institution wants to contact. Since estimates are based on samples of the total population in the various searches, a school is told the error associated with each estimate, and what the number of names received will be, with 95 percent certainty, within a given range.

Student market data are available through the Volume Projection Service in three ways:

1. **National data.** These data on college-bound seniors are available each year and are based on all students who take the SAT as seniors (SRS pool).
2. **Demographic data.** As College Board representatives prepare Student Search projection data on PSAT/NMSQT and SAT populations for individual colleges, opportunities are available to track data using several selection variables.
3. **Academic data.** An institution may hold its selection criteria consistent from year to year. The actual numbers of names ordered over the years provide trend data for identified population cells.

National Data

In Section A of the Participation Form, one can monitor the number of students completing the PSAT. For example, the number of students taking the PSAT increased from 1 million in 1975 to 1.4 million in 1983. This trend line then can be compared in the context of other information, such as that available through the National Center for Educational Statistics. As an individual institution begins to pursue its Searches, more refined college-going population trend data can be collected if the selection criteria have some consistency over time. Specifically, a college that uses Section I or J of the SSS Participation Form (state identification or zip code identification) can monitor the shifting patterns in these more limited geographical areas. This is important because each institution has a natural market with defined geographic characteristics. Further, an institu-

SECTION A OF THE STUDENT SEARCH PARTICIPATION FORM

SEARCHES	(A) Check the Appropriate Search.	Participation Form Deadline	Estimated Number of Students in Search	Estimated Shipping Date of Lists and Materials
Winter ATP Search (Check only 1 option.)	☐ Option 1 (complete): Based on students tested during October, November, and December 1983 administrations of the SAT; also includes students who took the SAT in the previous year and may have been included in the 1983 Summer ATP Search.	Nov. 30, 1983	740,000	Jan. 20, 1984
	☐ Option 2 (partial): Based on same student pool as in Option 1 but eliminates students reported in the 1983 Summer ATP Search.		230,000	
	☐ Option 3 (partial): Based on same student pool as in Option 1 but eliminates students reported in last year's Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search.		110,000	
Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search–Early Option	☐ Based on students who took the PSAT/NMSQT in October 1983.	Jan. 16, 1984	1,158,000	Mar. 30, 1984
Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search–Late Option	☐ Based on students who took the PSAT/NMSQT in October 1983.	Feb. 13, 1984	1,158,000	Apr. 30, 1984
Limited PSAT/NMSQT Search	☐ Based on students who were not reported, or who were reported five or fewer times in the Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search.	May 1, 1984	470,000	June 29, 1984
Summer ATP Search (Check only 1 option.)	☐ Option 1 (complete): Based on 9th, 10th, or 11th grade students who have taken the SAT any time from October 1983 through June 1984.	July 11, 1984	450,000	Sept. 10. 1984
	☐ Option 2 (partial): Based on same student pool as in Option 1 but eliminates students reported in this year's Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search.		108,000	

SECTIONS 1, J, AND O OF THE STUDENT SEARCH PARTICIPATION FORM

- Select only one option. You cannot enter specifications for both options on a single Participation Form.
- The APO/FPO category refers to U.S. Government personnel or their families living abroad.
- The foreign category provides names and addresses of candidates living outside the United States, except those in the APO/FPO category.
- Please note that some foreign addresses may be incomplete or inaccurate and therefore nondeliverable because of students' gridding errors or omissions. Also, if you requested search results on punched cards, note that foreign country names will be abbreviated because of lack of space; some post offices will not accept foreign country abbreviations.

☐ No specification

Option 1 (Check up to two boxes.)

1 ☐ USA
2 ☐ APO/FPO
3 ☐ Foreign

Option 2 (Check up to 20 boxes.)

- If you entered a specification under Option 1 above, do not enter any here.

01 ☐ Alabama
02 ☐ Alaska
03 ☐ Arizona
04 ☐ Arkansas
05 ☐ California
06 ☐ Colorado
07 ☐ Connecticut
08 ☐ Delaware
09 ☐ District of Columbia
10 ☐ Florida
11 ☐ Georgia
12 ☐ Hawaii
13 ☐ Idaho
14 ☐ Illinois
15 ☐ Indiana
16 ☐ Iowa
17 ☐ Kansas
18 ☐ Kentucky
19 ☐ Louisiana
20 ☐ Maine
21 ☐ Maryland
22 ☐ Massachusetts
23 ☐ Michigan
24 ☐ Minnesota
25 ☐ Mississippi
26 ☐ Missouri
27 ☐ Montana
28 ☐ Nebraska
29 ☐ Nevada
30 ☐ New Hampshire
31 ☐ New Jersey
32 ☐ New Mexico
33 ☐ New York
34 ☐ North Carolina
35 ☐ North Dakota
36 ☐ Ohio
37 ☐ Oklahoma
38 ☐ Oregon
39 ☐ Pennsylvania
54 ☐ Puerto Rico
40 ☐ Rhode Island
41 ☐ South Carolina
42 ☐ South Dakota
43 ☐ Tennessee
44 ☐ Texas
45 ☐ Utah
46 ☐ Vermont
47 ☐ Virginia
48 ☐ Washington
49 ☐ West Virginia
50 ☐ Wisconsin
51 ☐ Wyoming
56 ☐ APO/FPO
60 ☐ Foreign

- If you made a specification in Option 1 of Geographic Location (page 3), do not specify zip codes.
- If you checked a state in Option 2 of Geographic Location, do not enter a zip code from **that state.**
- If you checked APO/FPO in Option 2 of Geographic Location, you may specify zip codes, but you should not enter APO/FPO zip codes.
- If you checked Foreign in Option 2 of Geographic Location, you may specify zip codes.
- Enter zip code's state at the right of each zip code specified.
- You may enter for each zip code one, two, three, four, or five digits, depending upon the size of the geographical area you want to cover (e.g., entering 60 will insure your getting students with zip codes having first three digits of 600, 601, 602,.....609). **If you use fewer than five digits for a zip code, begin with the boxes at the left and leave the remaining boxes blank. Do not put zeros in unused boxes.**
- **Note:** If you are participating in the Winter Search or in the Summer Search, you may *not* enter specifications for zip codes in this item and also enter specifications in County of Residence (page 5). That is, you may specify zip codes or counties, but not both.

☐ No specification

1 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____ 7 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____
2 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____ 8 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____
3 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____ 9 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____
4 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____ 10 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____
5 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____ 11 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____
6 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____ 12 ☐☐☐☐☐ State____

☐ No specification

Range: $0-$9,900

Enter the range of parental contribution desired: high and low.

High $_____

Low $_____

tion that uses consistent selection criteria can keep a careful record of the student population trends seen for specific zip codes in the Search output ordered or through volume projections.

Demographic Data

Shifts in the character of the student market often may be important as an institution attempts to understand the kind of marketing approach that may work best. For example, in recent years an increasing number of women have entered higher education in the United States. What implications might this have for the kind of recruiting approach that postsecondary institutions employ? An institution can conduct a Search that uses sex as one of the selection criteria. An institution experiencing a shift in its student population may wish to segment its Search along gender lines in order to track female/male enrollment patterns over a period of years; or it may wish to collect and maintain the volume projection data made available at the college's request through the College Board's regional offices.

With an increasing number of minority students entering higher education, institutions should also be aware of local and national shifts so that they may focus their literature and recruitment efforts in a proper and sensitive manner.

All of this market analysis is available to colleges and universities who retain historical data from either the Spring Search, which is based on the PSAT/NMSQT, or the other Student Searches, which are based on the SAT. Family financial status is one important bit of information available only with Winter or Summer Searches. Parental contribution as reported by the students can be employed in either a projection or the actual Search. Monitoring this area may be especially important to institutions with rapidly rising tuition rates. Section O of the form can provide information highlighting trends with respect to the amount of money parents are able to contribute for educational expenses at levels specified by the college or university. As institutional planners seek to understand the possible impact of tuition increases, such information on the economic strength of a natural market is critical. It is important to emphasize that this information is reported by students and translated into a formula that includes parental income, number of children in the family, number of children in college, and so forth.

SECTIONS M AND U OF THE STUDENT SEARCH PARTICIPATION FORM

[redacted]

- Specifications can be entered for grade average only, for rank only, or for **both.**
- Note that if you check both grade average and rank you will receive the names of students matching either your grade average or your rank specification.
- An approximate letter grade equivalent and an approximate grade equivalent on a 0.00-4.00 scale are provided for each grade category.

GRADE AVERAGE

- If you are interested in a wide range of grade average, check two boxes, high and low, OR if you are interested in a narrower range of grade average, check only one box.

☐ No specification

1	☐	95-100 (A)	(4.0)
2	☐	90-94 (A-)	(3.5-3.9)
3	☐	85-89 (B)	(3.0-3.4)
4	☐	80-84 (B-)	(2.5-2.9)
5	☐	75-79 (C)	(2.0-2.4)
6	☐	70-74 (C-)	(1.5-1.9)
7	☐	65-69 (D)	(1.0-1.4)
8	☐	60-64 (D-)	(0.5-0.9)
9	☐	59 and below (F)	(0.0-0.4)

☐ **Note:** Check this box if you checked only one box above.

RANK

- If you are interested in a wide range of rank, check two boxes, high and low, OR if you are interested in a narrower range of rank, check only one box.

☐ No specification

1	☐	Highest tenth	4 ☐	Third fifth
2	☐	Second tenth	5 ☐	Fourth fifth
3	☐	Second fifth	6 ☐	Last fifth

☐ **Note:** Check this box if you checked only one box above.

[redacted]

- If you are interested in a wide range of high school average, check two boxes, high and low, OR if you are interested in a narrower range of average, check only one box.
- An approximate letter grade equivalent is provided for each grade average category.

☐ No specification

1	☐	93-100 (A)	
2	☐	87-92 (A-, B+)	
3	☐	83-86 (B)	
4	☐	77-82 (B-, C+)	
5	☐	73-76 (C)	
6	☐	67-72 (C-, D+)	
7	☐	66 and below (D and below)	

☐ **Note:** Check this box if you checked only one box above.

Academic Data

An important factor for any institution to understand is the trend that may be developing regarding academic ability of students within a given market. By retaining the College Board volume projection data or the data derived by participating in the Student Search Service, an institution can monitor the ebb and flow in numbers of students in certain academic ability cells. For example, College Board data clearly provide us with the aggregate information that the number of students scoring at the 600 level or above on both the verbal and mathematics sections of the SAT have decreased during the last ten years. While this information is of great interest on the national level, it may be important that an institution understand more clearly what trends may be developing on a regional or local level. Naturally, it is possible for the number of high-ability students to increase in a given local region, while the national trend may be running in the opposite direction. Of course, this sort of analysis of student ability is possible at any score level.

The same longitudinal tracking of high school performance can occur as an institution retains the information made available through Section M or U of the Participation Form. The trend lines for different ability groups based on high school performance and standarized testing can be compared for consistency. Variations may reflect grading or achievement patterns within a limited geographic region, and may be important information to share with college faculty and academic planners.

One of the most important areas for which data might be derived is information regarding the academic interests held by students in a given market. Students provide the information on the biographical section of the PSAT/NMSQT and the Student Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ) on the SAT. This information can be critical to academic planners who may be attempting to respond to the interests of the market place. But it is important to remember that this information is based solely on SAT takers and not the total population of high school graduates.

At Michigan State University, the trend data regarding specific academic interests have been used in discussions with academic deans and academic planners. For example, we have plotted the number of students interested in each of the academic areas pertinent to our institution over a seven-year period. We know that the number of students interested in veterinary medicine nationally rose from 1975 through 1982 and appears to be dropping sharply at this time. But student interest in computer science has increased fivefold during the same period. By retaining and updating this sort of data constantly, we believe that reasonable assumptions can be made about the academic interest of students over the next few years. Not only may these projections be vital for planning recruitment activities, but they can be extremely helpful to academic administrators in allocating valuable resources.

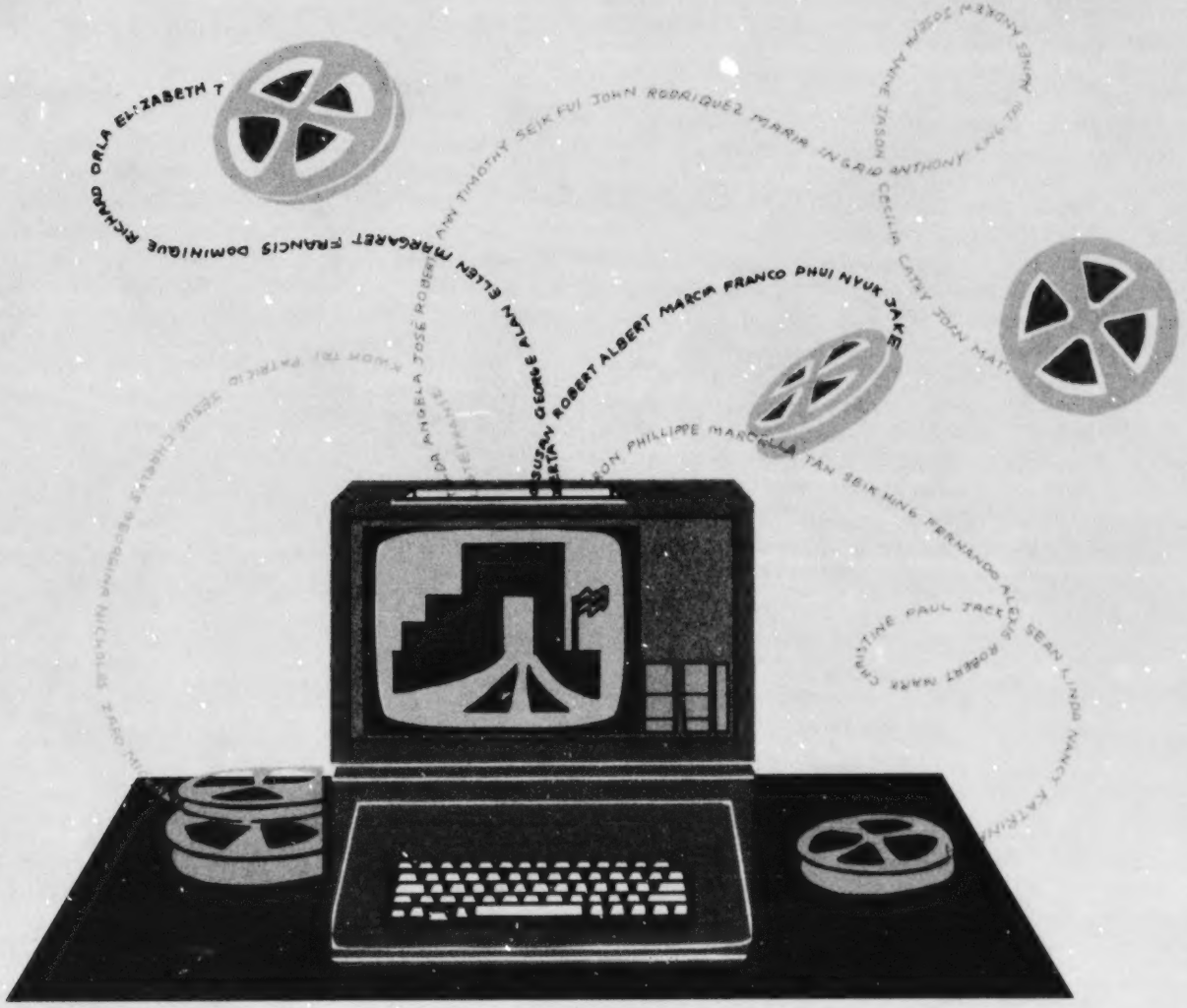
It is clear that the Student Search Service provides a wealth of data for potential market analysis. Any institution, even those lacking sophisticated institutional research departments or the time and budget to conduct extensive market research, can bring together an impressive market evaluation effort simply by employing the tools made available through Student Search in consistent and imaginative ways.

About the Author

William H. Turner is Director of the Office of Admissions and Scholarships at Michigan State University. He is active in several professional organizations and currently is a member of the Executive Committee of the Midwestern Regional Assembly of the College Board.

BUILDING A RECRUITMENT DATA BASE WITH THE STUDENT SEARCH SERVICE

John W. Albright
M. O. Phelps
Claire C. Swann



By the late 1970s the need to expand student recruiting efforts was obvious, even at a large, stable state university like the University of Georgia (UGA). Fortunately for us in the UGA Admissions Office, our recruiting mission had not been simply to provide matriculants to fill classrooms and dormitories. The University of Georgia enjoyed a cautious growth plan through the 1960s and 1970s under an aggressive administration bent on establishing national prominence in research and in our graduate and professional schools. In a thriving Sunbelt state, this mix produced a university of less than 25,000 students that is ranked among the top 50 research institutions in the nation. The average UGA freshman scores over 1020 on the SAT. As a result, we experience a large excess of applications for undergraduate admission. (As many colleagues have added, winning an occasional national football championship did not hurt things, either.)

This emphasis on academic prominence has been reflected in our goals for recruiting undergraduate students. For the past two decades, our concern in UGA Admissions has been to recruit the quality undergraduate students necessary to match the growing excellence in faculty and facilities that our administration was providing. Specifically, we have judged this quality by the numbers of freshmen qualified by SAT score and high school grades to enter our 1,400-student Honors Program, by average SATs and grade-point averages, and by the numbers of National Merit and Achievement scholars we were able to enroll.

While our recruiting goals were clear, the means of coping with increasing competition from other colleges and with increasing data-handling chores was not. Our lists of prospects were growing exponentially. Recruiting two or three top freshmen a year was not enough; we needed hundreds. We were less and less able to follow our instincts toward personalizing all contacts with our superior student prospects, many of whom were becoming marketing sophisticates that were biased against impersonal appeals of all kinds. (As one highly recruited prospect recently complained, "I was beginning to feel that my name was 'Dear Prospective Student.' ")

Developing a Recruitment Data Base

In 1979 the Admissions Office employed an associate director with a public relations background whose responsibilities were devoted solely to recruiting. At the same time, the university's Administrative Data Processing (ADP) group employed a systems analyst whose first task was to help the admissions office develop a prototype recruitment data base.

This two-person task force had a series of meetings, at which they decided the resources at their disposal—including ADP's IBM 350-175 mainframe computer accessible by tape and remote terminals—were adequate to develop the recruitment data base. They decided that purchasing a ready-made recruitment software package was not necessary. Additional brainstorming sessions were held over the first six months with various members of the staffs of the two offices, and other colleges' recruitment data systems were investigated. Existing UGA recruitment needs and practices were reviewed and future needs were pinpointed.

Several major factors have evolved out of the three years of our experience with the recruitment data base, which will be discussed below.

Names

Of primary recruiting importance is finding and using a prospect's "correct" name. Perhaps as many as one in four of UGA's prospects in the South should be addressed by other than their first name—sometimes nicknames, often middle names. Our data handling had to be recruitment oriented. Misspelled names because of computer truncation had to be avoided. This required the ADP group to change their thinking. For instance, a revelation to the ADP people was that producing mailing labels last-name-first had a negative recruiting impact. They had been producing labels that way because that was the order in which the names were stored and because, as they had reasoned, "The mail was getting delivered anyway."

"Dirty" Data

The recruitment data base receives information about its prospects from other data bases. ADP has been in the process of developing data bases within its student information system for registration, test scores (SATs, Achievement Tests, etc.), institutional contacts (an ETS-based listing of high schools and FICE college codes), housing, financial aid, and admissions. The task force decided early that recruitment data would be "dirty," that is, it would contain inevitable inaccuracies about complete names, mailing addresses, test scores, and academic interests because many of the sources of recruitment data would be second-hand or informally reported. Therefore, the recruitment file only *receives* information about new or existing prospects from these other data bases; it does not share any of its information with them. The key data elements for finding matches between students on the recruitment file and the other data bases were last name, birth date, zip code and high school code, and whenever possible, social security number.

Data for Recruiting

An important operating concept is that recruitment data by itself never recruited a single student. The recruitment data base has to be easily and quickly acces-

sible by the people who need the data. These people include:

- The eight admissions counselors who are assigned geographic recruitment territories in Georgia and surrounding states. The work of these counselors includes visiting over 300 high schools each fall and attending college day fairs in their respective areas.
- A group of 70 faculty recruitment coordinators in UGA's various schools and departments, who need to contact superior student and scholarship prospects for their academic areas and who are asked to answer inquiries from those prospects who respond to direct mail from the admissions office.
- Other recruitment assistance groups, including 350 student recruitment team volunteers and expanding groups of young alumni and Honors Program alumni recruiters.

Versatility

The data base is designed to be expandable so we can include transfer student prospects or a larger group of freshman prospects of average ability, in case either group becomes more important to admissions recruiting goals.

The recruitment data base is rebuilt each April when we receive the Spring PSAT/NMSQT Student Search Service tapes. Each of the four tapes of 16,000 prospects that we order include names, addresses, high school institutional codes, race (a special tape request), PSAT score ranges (depending on the specifications of various tape requests), and academic interest areas. The Search tapes, called by some marketing experts the best prospect lists available in the United States, invariably identify 80 percent of our superior freshmen (i.e., those with combined scores of over 1,100 SATs) for us while those students are still high school juniors. In 1979 when we received the four tapes, we merged names duplicated on more than one tape and then entered the Search prospects into the recruitment data base. Each prospect had a unique social-security-like number assigned, as well as an anticipated entry date; for example, 1979 Spring Search high school juniors were assigned freshmen class of fall 1980 anticipated entry dates.

All the basic biographic information for each prospect is put into a "root" segment that can be displayed on the five terminal screens in the admissions office for review or updating. There are also secondary segments possible for each prospect, which have separate terminal screen displays. The most useful of these segments is the "communications" segment, where two-digit codes are assigned to prospects. Each communication code describes the prospect according to the following:

1. **special achievements,** such as National Merit/Achievement semifinalist, governor's school participant, alumni relative, or Georgia Certificate of Merit winner
2. **contacts** the prospect made with UGA, such as applied for admission, had an SAT score sent to UGA, returned a reply card from UGA direct mail, attended a campus visit or other UGA-sponsored program, met a UGA recruiter at a high school visit, or inquired about a scholarship
3. **responses** UGA made to the prospect, such as catalog sent, inquiry referred to academic department, or newsletter sent. Lists and labels are easily ordered by selecting prospects who have the same communication codes or combinations of codes.

The other secondary segments are for test scores, extracts from the admissions data base when prospects apply for admission, and "remarks." The remarks segment gives our recruiters the chance to add free-form remarks to a data base about prospects they meet or hear about, such as, "may also be prelaw major"; "father is state legislator"; "plays in a jazz band." The first line of the remarks segment is always reserved for a prospect's "name called" when we discover his or her familiar name through our personal contacts or from reply cards returned from our direct-mail efforts. There is also a "name search" terminal screen available that displays names in alphabetical order along with birth date, zip code, sex, and high school code.

Each spring the new Search prospects are matched for suspected duplication with existing recruitment file prospects obtained previously. The existing names are mostly of high school juniors who had sent us their SAT scores, or names of the 4,000 Georgia high school juniors who ranked in the top five percent of their classes and were nominated for our 24-year-old Georgia Certificate of Merit program. All new Search names also are checked visually for such inevitable truncation errors as "CHRISTOPHE JONESJR" for "Christopher Jones, Jr." The only change made to the Search data is in translating the two-digit codes that Search uses for academic interests into the three-digit College Board codes that our other data bases use.

Using the Recruitment Data Base

For our first year, 1980–81, we used the recruitment data base simply to produce mailing labels and lists. Our late spring and late summer mass mailings were built around various combinations of labels we ordered so that we could personalize the messages in different printed cover letters. (We still had not purchased word-processing equipment.) Each admissions counselor received alphabetical printouts of prospects for each high school in his or her territory. These high school printouts included all the communication codes, "remarks," and biographical data. Counselors used the lists to plan fall visits to their assigned high schools and to search for key scholarship prospects. Alphabetical printouts by academic interest also were produced for our faculty recruitment

coordinators; on their printouts we used the "literal" names instead of the two-digit communication codes. As our recruitment year progressed, we added additional prospects to the recruitment data base and we updated information about existing prospects as they sent us SATs, returned mail, visited the campus, applied for admission, and so on. Updated lists then were distributed to recruiters.

However, it was not until the admissions office purchased an IBM Displaywriter word processor in 1982 that the recruitment data base began to have a significant impact on our efforts. The ADP team quickly worked out a method of transmitting information about groups of data base prospects when admissions requests them. The specified information is transmitted via telephone modem between the Computer Center and the Displaywriter. Included with each prospect's data is such information as full name, "name called" if known, address, high school name, sex, and academic interest. Admissions then sorts through the names received on the floppy discs using the Displaywriter's Report Pack software and selects prospects to receive different types of letters. The addressees are greeted by their "name called" or the appropriate prefix and last name, and their letters are particularized with references to their high schools, academic majors, or state of residence. With word processing, we finally are able to write personalized letters to large volumes of prospects in the same way we had done when we first started recruiting small groups of superior students two decades earlier.

A recent example of our use of the Student Search-based recruitment data file is indicative of the tremendous potential this system has for the in-house efforts of a state university admissions office. One of the four Spring Search tapes we order is of nearby prospects whose "selection index" from their PSAT scores indicates they may become National Merit semifinalists. Information about those five hundred "NM probables" is entered into the data file with a special communication code attached. These prospects then are sent special display-written cover letters in their spring mailings before their senior year inviting them to a two-day summer honors seminar on campus with the added offer of having their seminar registration fees waived. Our admissions counselors also have these superior prospects identified on their high school lists so they can plan their fall traveling schedules to see "NM probables," especially those who return information cards, are Certificate of Merit winners, attend the honors seminar, or send us their SAT scores. Faculty recruitment coordinators have these prospects' names highlighted on the lists of students we send them in the early fall. In early October, the list of "NM probables" then is matched with the published list of National Merit semifinalists that we receive, at which time we immediately send letters from the university president and follow-up letters from the admissions director inviting the semifinalists to December and January campus visits for scholarship prospects. Small groups of semifinalists also are invited to special breakfasts held in different locations throughout the state in the fall. As these semifinalists make reservations for these special occasions, we select their information from the displaywriter file to do rosters. We also code in the fact of their attendance in the recruitment data file for later statistical analysis of recruitment activity success. In all cases we personalize all of our correspondence when we can, especially by addressing prospects with their correct "name called."

In other words, because we are able to target groups of prospects early and comprehensively using Student Search, a computer data base, and word-processing equipment, the University of Georgia now treats large numbers of special students in the personal and timely way that students have come to expect, even from a large state university.

Were we to pinpoint the key to the success we have enjoyed since we first developed our recruitment data file, we would highlight the professional cooperation between the admissions and data processing staffs. We learned to appreciate each other's problems and applaud each other's contributions. The sum of our efforts has been more than the value either of us alone could have added and is uniquely appropriate to the needs and resources or our institution.

About the Authors

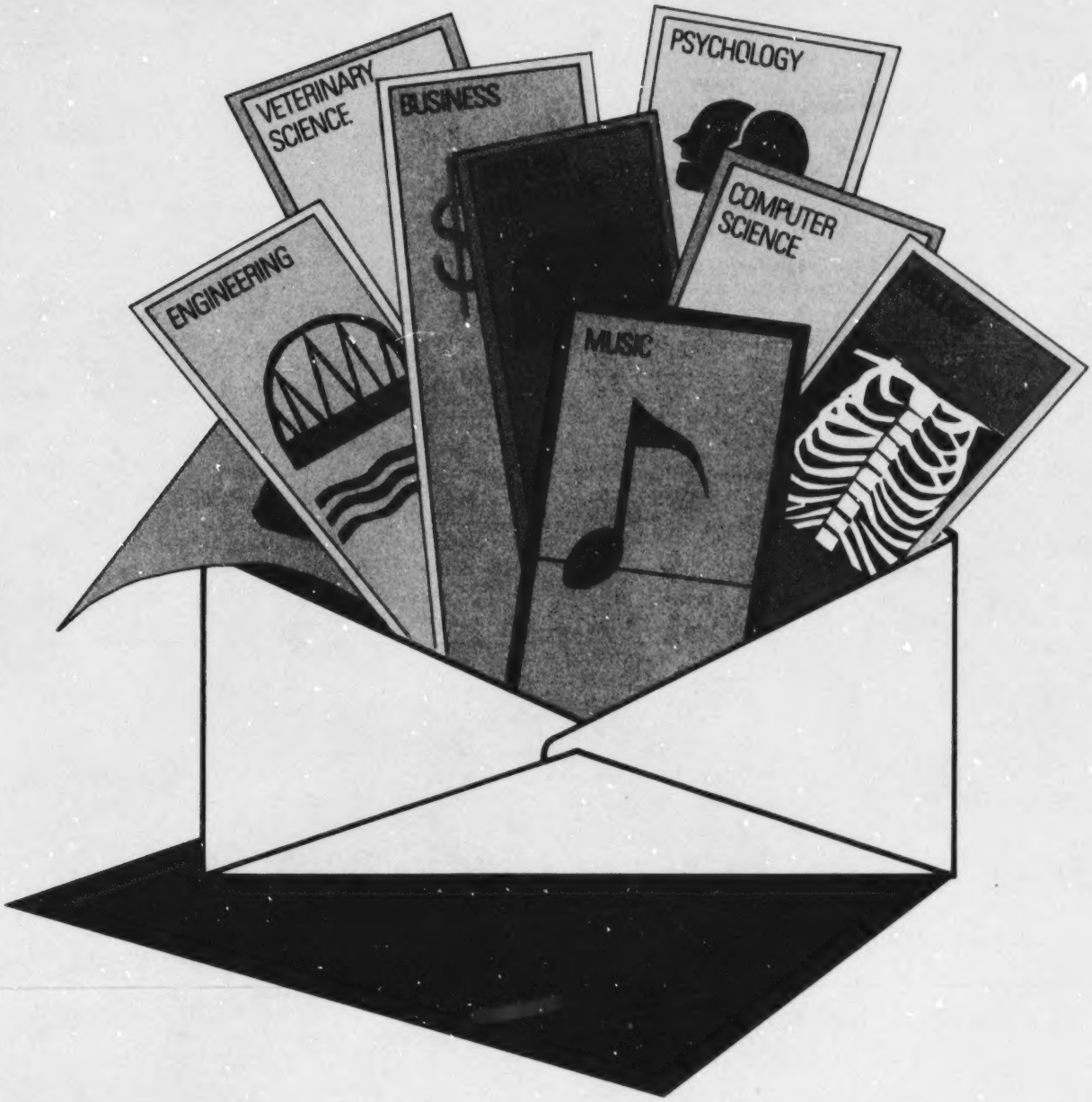
John W. Albright has been Director of Recruitment at the University of Georgia for the past four years. He also has worked in alumni relations at Valdosta State College.

M. O. Phelps currently is Executive Director of Admissions at the University of Georgia and has served in the Admissions Office there for the past 25 years. In addition, he has been a high school counselor, a coach, and a principal.

Claire C. Swann currently is Acting Director of Admissions at the University of Georgia and has been associated with the Admissions Office there for the past 20 years. She also has been President of both the Southern and the Georgia Associations of College Registrars and Admission Officers.

CURRICULUM-SPECIFIC DIRECT MAIL: PART OF THE MIX

Susan L. Sommer



In an era when many colleges and universities are faced with declining enrollments, Michigan Technological University (MTU) faces a similar yet somewhat unique set of problems.

Founded nearly one hundred years ago as a college of mining and metallurgy, Michigan Tech now has one of the largest undergraduate engineering enrollments in the nation. It also offers curricula in the physical and natural sciences, business administration, computer science, forestry, liberal arts, and engineering technology. Approximately two-thirds of its 7,400 students are enrolled in engineering curricula—two-thirds and rising fast, and therein lie the problems:

- In its primary recruiting markets, Michigan Tech virtually is synonymous with engineering. There is less recognition of the other curricula, either among potential students or among those who influence students' decisions—parents, teachers, and guidance counselors.
- Nationwide, engineering is a popular career choice among students due to current job availability, and there is considerably less interest in areas such as forestry, biological science, physics, and so on.
- Michigan Tech is located in a remote section of Michigan's upper peninsula. There is little industrial base to support a returning student market. Thus, it is quite dependent on the 18-year-old market for its new students. According to a report prepared by the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, this market is projected to decline 32 percent in the northcentral region of the country by 1994.
- By law Michigan Tech, a state-supported institution, cannot exceed a 20 percent nonresident enrollment.*

The irony of being forced to turn away highly qualified prospective engineering and computer science students while struggling to fill nonengineering curricula is not lost on Michigan Tech. Since 1978 when the problem first was identified, many programs to counteract this trend have been introduced and implemented. Now in its fourth year, one such program involves curriculum-specific direct-mail campaigns using the College Board's Student Search Service.

Direct-mail Campaigns for Academic Departments

Each academic department in need of marketing assistance has been asked to analyze its current student base demographically, including test scores, geographic location of hometown, age, and so on. Short-term and long-term marketing plans for each department have been developed cooperatively by the department head or program director and the staff assistant for marketing and recruiting. In nearly all cases, an ongoing direct-mail campaign has been part of the marketing mix, its relative importance weighed by the percentage of new student enrollment in the 18-year-old category. The marketing plans tend to vary in complexity by department. They are designed to be flexible and in many cases serve the dual function of strategic planning, as well as the means by which faculty members can participate in the marketing process.

With the demographics of the desired markets established, names and intended college majors are ordered through the Student Search Service. As the demographics—particularly the desired verbal and math scores—vary by department, orders are made separately when they are needed. A Student Search file is created that contains the names, addresses, and intended college majors of all participants. Mailing labels then are generated in zip code order and personalized letters (page 36) are computer printed, the intended college major code keying the appropriate paragraphs. A high-speed, letter-quality laser printer reduces the time involved (6,000 full-page letters can be produced in one hour).

Each packet normally contains a personalized letter, the appropriate career/departmental brochure, and a coded business reply card. The packets then are bulk mailed. (MTU research has shown that the class of postage has no discernible effect on rate of return.)

Each returned reply card prompts the mailing of a viewbook along with other information as requested. The student then is entered into the admissions office inquirers' file, a computer file of prospective applicants, according to the code on the brochure. Historically, all updating of responses was performed manually. In fall of 1983, a match run was generated between the Student Search file and the inquirer's file to determine initial response rates. The matches—those who participate in the mail program and respond with an inquiry—then were updated in the inquirers' file by an identifying code. Later, the applicant roster is matched against the inquirers' file to determine the application rate of respondents. Those students who respond initially but do not submit an application are contacted again.

Each department participating in the Student Search Service direct-mail program contacts between 2,000 and 4,000 students. The more narrowly defined curricula, such as medical technology for example, tend to be somewhat self-limiting. Through research efforts, as well as many years' experience with direct mail, Michigan Tech is well aware of those geographic areas that are likely to net substantial returns and those that are not. Efforts then are concentrated on the productive regions that in Michigan Tech's case include Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

* State of Michigan. Act No. 261, Public Acts of 1982, Sec. 6. (1).

Michigan Technological University

Houghton, Michigan 49931

Joan Senior
1234 Anystreet St.
Farfromhere, MI 49999

Dear Joan:

Selecting a college shouldn't be difficult. There are thousands from which to choose. The problem is finding the right match between you and the college. Data recently crossed my desk indicating you have the interests and abilities that we have found in our most successful freshmen at Michigan Technological University. This information was supplied by the Student Search Service of the College Entrance Examination Board.

Michigan Tech is a study in contrasts. It is one of the largest schools of science and technology in the country, but has a total enrollment of only 7,000 students. This means your classes and labs will be small enough to give you the kind of education you hope to find, yet specialized enough to provide you with true depth in the field of your choice. We are located in one of the most scenic areas of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, but our approach to education is anything but backwoods--as evidenced by our state-of-the-art equipment and laboratories.

So what does that have to do with you? At the time you took the PSAT you indicated an interest in journalism. And your scores also indicate an aptitude in mathematics and sciences as well--perfect "matches" for Michigan Tech's program in Scientific and Technical Communications. In this program, you can blend your writing or broadcast talents with a subspecialty in science or technology. The result? Well, a quick scan of the enclosed information tells that story.

Please take a few moments to review the enclosed information. If Michigan Tech interests you as much as we hope it does, complete the enclosed postage-paid reply card and return it to us today. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sue Sommer
Staff Assistant, Administrative Services

P.S. Postal Services too slow? Call us at (906) 487-1885.

Results

Initial response rates have ranged from 13.2 to 26.4 percent. Generally, those curricula that are offered by relatively few competing institutions (i.e., forestry) net a greater response rate, while those curricula that are similar but not identical to the intended college major (i.e., MTU's program of Scientific and Technical Communications draws from an intended college major of journalism with high mathematics aptitude) net the lower response rates.

Application rates of respondents likewise have been encouraging. For example:

- A 1981 campaign that stressed Wood and Fiber Utilization—a small department in MTU's School of Forestry and Wood Products—accounted for nearly one-third of its freshman class. Nine of the thirty entering freshmen in that department indicated that the direct-mail campaign prompted their application and subsequent matriculation.
- Thirty-seven percent of 1982-83 applicants (those who matriculated in fall 1983) in the biological sciences program had been 1982 Student Search Service participants. However, it was discovered that in widely available curricula such as biological sciences, where nearly every Michigan college and university offer such a program, additional retention programs are required to ensure matriculation. These retention programs have since been built into the biological sciences market plan and have been implemented in 1983-84.

Michigan Tech's program of curriculum-specific direct mail works because of an advantageous mix of various factors. Through extensive research on its freshmen classes, MTU knows that the vast majority of its students not only decided on Michigan Tech in their junior year or earlier, but also decided on their career fields as well at that time. For the purpose of the direct-mail program, it is safe to assume that those students who would consider Michigan Tech also would be fairly certain of their intended college major. (Nevertheless, the career goals of high school juniors are subject to change. Recognizing this, all of the letters include a brief postscript outlining the other curricula available at Michigan Tech and urging students to use the reply card to inquire further.)

In addition, by virtue of its size and technological nature, Michigan Tech has a wealth of computer hardware and software support. Keying personal, curriculum-specific letters on a large scale and tracking each respondent throughout the admissions process should not be attempted without clear communication and thorough planning between the office of admissions and the data processing service.

Care also must be taken to avoid fragmentation of institutional image—a real hazard in this type of marketing. All such campaigns should be coordinated through one office, with careful attention paid to the graphic unity of all printed pieces.

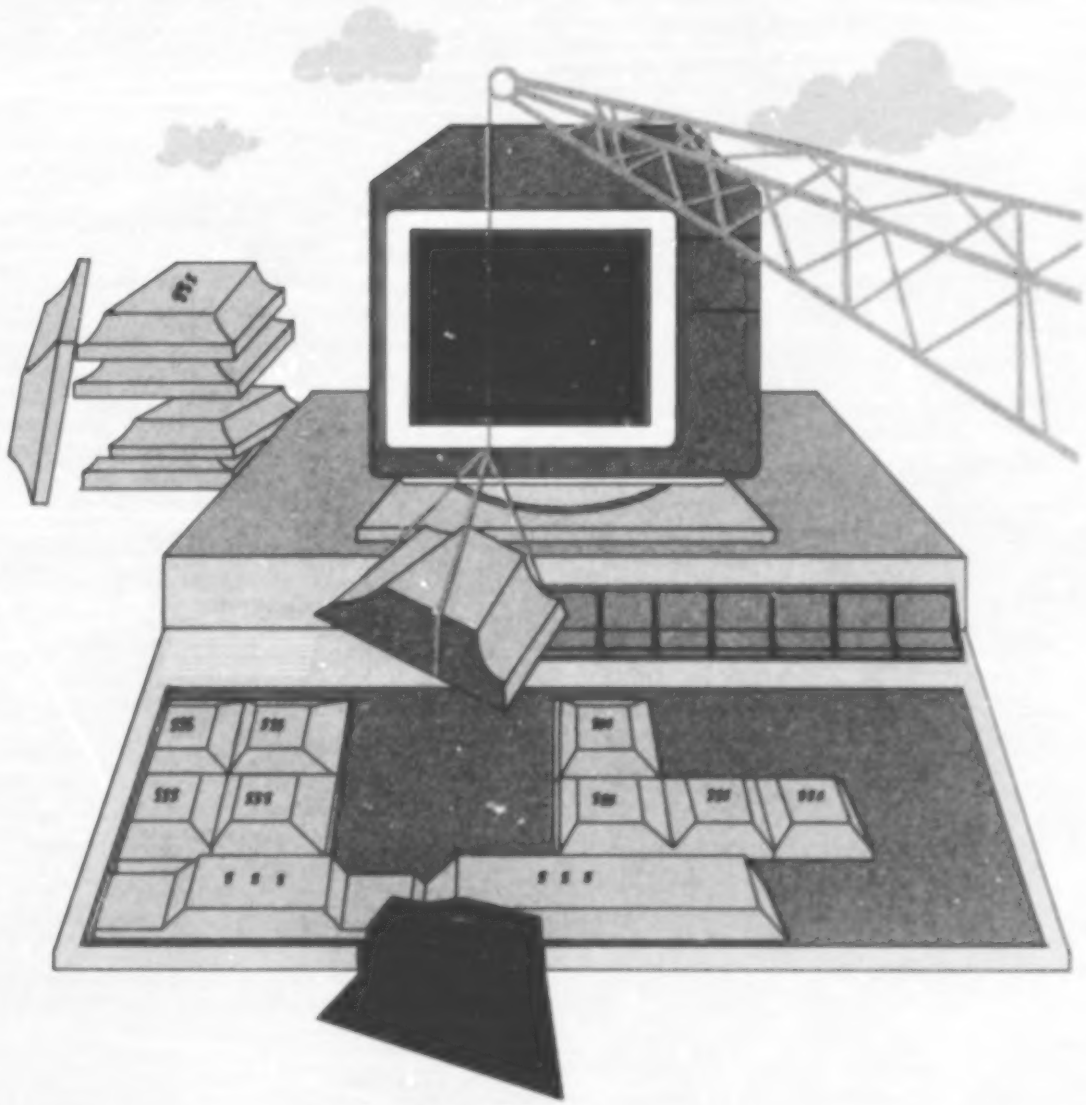
Finally, for programs such as the sort Michigan Tech has administered for the past four years to be effective, several factors must juxtapose. Faculty and administrative personnel must be committed to the plan. Sufficient funding must be available and sufficient time allotted. Realistic goals must be set and the means for evaluation established. The planners should know what types of students they seek for their program in terms of demographics, aptitudes, and life goals. Most important, all those involved in curriculum-specific marketing should realize what admissions personnel have known all along—that the recruitment of students is extremely complex, and that direct mail is not panacea but rather a highly effective tool when employed creatively.

About the Author

Susan L. Sommer is Staff Assistant of Marketing and Recruiting at Michigan Technological University. Her activities include serving as coordinator for academic departments in need of student recruitment.

STUDENT SEARCH SERVICE: FOUNDATION FOR A COMPUTERIZED TRACKING SYSTEM

Glenn G. Carter



One way to best use the College Board's Student Search Service is through computerization of a prospect file. Such a system can make use of the variety of data available about prospects, maximize the ability to differentiate student populations, ease access to prospect names, and enhance the ability to evaluate the results of recruiting strategies. A computerized prospect tracking system serves as an invaluable tool in developing the institution's admissions plan, as well as providing a foundation for the institution's marketing plan.

The Student Search Service is the most efficient source of prospective student names presently available. The system is limited to college-bound students and provides an institution with the ability to target students more likely admissable and interested in that institution. Using Search names as part of a recruiting plan enables the admissions staff to employ the most efficient strategies for reaching students and for broadening the prospect base, thus increasing the number of prospects and the means to convert prospects into inquirers.

The Pennsylvania State University uses a computerized integrated on-line prospect file. The design and use of the prospect file will be described from an *operational* perspective.

Why A Computerized Prospect File?

A computerized prospect file is absolutely essential for handling high volume operations because it:

- provides the means to expand and at the same time control the use of prospect names
- minimizes duplication
- facilitates sequential mailings
- targets populations
- provides the vehicle to conduct market and cost/benefit research

By building into a prospect file a system to match names, addresses, and social security numbers, one can integrate into a single system the names from the Student Search Service with those who took the SAT exam late, or inquired independently, or were contacted personally. By merging these various prospect groups, one can efficiently manage preapplication communications.

An institution should define each target population that it wants to treat differently in its admissions/marketing plan. That different treatment may be as subtle as a change in the content of the mass mailing letters, or as drastic as a completely new recruiting campaign for a selected population. A computer prospect file allows grouping of students by geographic area, academic quality, ethnic background, and academic interest. By differentiating such populations, one can serve the specific needs of these students more efficiently and effectively.

Initially one of the least appreciated advantages of having a computerized prospect file is its managerial benefits. The ability to measure the results of mass mailings and other recruiting strategies, measure market penetration, and conduct cost/benefit analysis is invaluable to an effective institutional admissions plan.

Penn State and the Student Search Service

Penn State is a comprehensive research university with 56,749 resident degree students enrolled in the fall of 1982. There were 17,914 new undergraduate degree students admitted during the 1981–82 admission year. The traditional student has access to 20 undergraduate campuses and 160 different associate and baccalaureate majors. The university serves a diverse set of constituents. The primary Penn State market is the state of Pennsylvania, with approximately 15 percent of all Pennsylvania college-bound students enrolling in Penn State baccalaureate programs. Approximately 90 percent of new student admissions are Pennsylvanians; the secondary market is the out-of-state population, particularly from nearby states.

The Pennsylvania State University has purchased names from the Student Search Service since 1976. We began, as most institutions do, by purchasing a limited population in label format. The initial emphasis was on high-achieving and minority students from Pennsylvania. The original purchase of approximately 15,000 names now has grown into some 130,000 purchased names and some 20 variable combination tapes. The Penn State prospect file is an integral part of a new student system at Penn State that evolved over its four-year history from a stand-alone system to the present fully integrated on-line system.

Designing the Prospect File

When designing a prospect system, admissions officers should be aware of several critical elements:

- minimization of duplication
- scope of the file
- multiple data entry
- flexible input/output control code system
- select system
- integration with the application file

Minimizing duplication was one of the most time consuming and perplexing segments to design of the initial Penn State prospect system. Since social security numbers are not provided with the PSAT/NMSQT Search and inquirers often do not include a social security number in correspondence, a system for matching names becomes the heart of any prospect file. The Penn State prospect system uses several automatic systems for managing duplication. If no social security number is avail-

able, one is assigned. The newest evolution of the system provides a daily or periodic "near match" report to furnish a regular opportunity to manually correct potential duplications.

The scope of the data available about individual students varies from just a name and address to the "life history" of the student. An inquiry may provide only a name and an address; the PSAT/NMSQT and Summer and Winter ATP Searches provide name, address, high school code, intended major, and the data provided by students submitting SAT scores to an institution including the complete Student Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ) and responses from the students' score report. The system should be designed to record most or all of this data. The data elements that may be determined as unimportant at the design stage may later be the ones you wish to "select" for some research report.

It is important to incorporate into the design a flexible table of input/output codes to record prospect sources and how names are used. The code system should identify purchased names by the variables selected, student inquirers by date, and college fair or high school visits by date and event. In turn, the various lists or selects drawn from the file should be identified by some type of "contact" code. These code systems are mandatory for follow-up; they eliminate duplicate mailings and help coordinate targeted student population recruitment strategies. The schema illustrates some of the input and output variables used in the Penn State system. The codes used vary by computer configuration. For example, the code used for merit scholars listing Penn State as one of their institutions of interest is MT.

The system should be designed for multiple-data entry modes. Plan to keep options open by designing the system to accommodate keying, scanning, cards, and tape entry. The Penn State system has a capability for using all data entry modes. Keying and tape entry are used primarily.

The system for selecting names from the prospect file is important for efficient use. The routine of most frequently used combinations of variables should be incorporated into a quick access select system as part of the initial design. Then a system for requesting special combinations of names or reports should be designed requiring a minimum of ad hoc progamming. For example, the institution expects to send four mailings annually to black students with SAT scores of 1,000 or better; a program package should be prepared to become part of a library of programs for easy access to the system. The system should be designed to generate label output and provide word processing interface. It also should generate various reports summarizing data within the prospect file. An example of a useful report would be one giving totals of prospects by various geographic configurations, i.e., states, counties, high schools, alumni club areas.

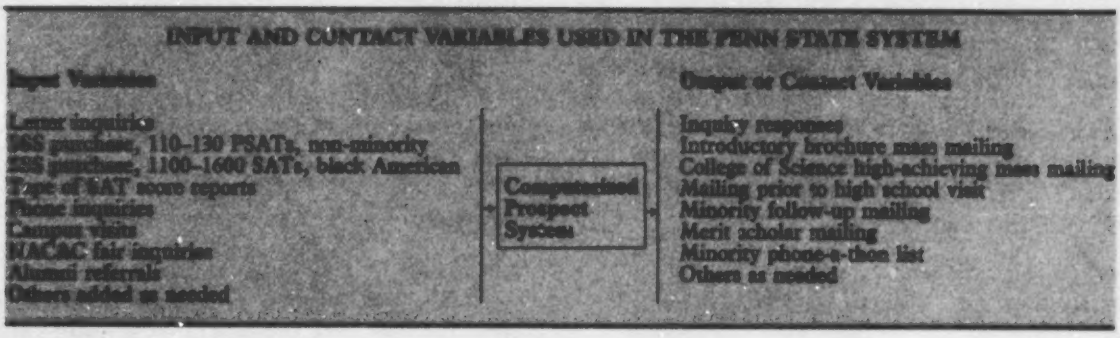
Providing interface between the applicant and the prospect file is an important design feature of any system. An integrated applicant and prospect file is ideal. In designing the prospect file, it must be recognized that an integrated system will likely increase the size and complexity of the applicant file beyond the present capacity of the institution's hardware. An integrated system provides the opportunity to begin the applicant file with the prospect information. This allows for efficiency of applicant input and the ability to retain prospect history as part of the applicant file throughout the applicant's experience with the institution.

The Penn State prospect file is a fully integrated on-line system. Data entered as part of prospecting automatically becomes part of the applicant's file. This saves time when entering applicant data and improves the data available for research and management of the institution's admissions effort.

Using the Prospect File

Once designed and brought on-line, the computerized prospect file is ready to become part of the admissions operational plan. At this point, the admissions officer normally will have the most day-to-day contact with the system.

There are four major sources for entering names into the computerized prospect file:



1. Student Search Service
2. students who send their SAT scores to the institution
3. letter and card inquirers
4. high school/fair contacts

In recent years, the Student Search Service has refined its system to minimize duplications. The use of all Searches during the year with minimum or no duplications makes the service more cost efficient. Penn State uses each of the three major scheduled Searches. The Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search is the most extensive and serves as the foundation for the prospect file. There are 115,000 names purchased each year from this Search. The names of students from Penn State's primary and secondary markets who did not take the PSATs are purchased from the Summer Search. The Winter Search is used to obtain the names of Pennsylvania minority students taking the SATs for the first time during their senior year in high school.

The second source for the prospect file is students who send one or more SAT score reports to Penn State during the year. At Penn State this consists of approximately 40,000 students throughout the year. More than half of these names are duplicates of the PSAT purchased names, but they arrive throughout the year and are not available when initial contact mailings are made to prospects.

The third source of names is the routine inquiry. At Penn State these names are "keyed" into the system during the spring and summer and up to early October of the year prior to the student's admission. Time does not permit the entering of inquiries into the system beyond this date. However, with the new on-line integrated system, Penn State plans to input data throughout the admissions cycle.

The fourth source of names is contacts made at various events such as high school visits, college nights, and alumni activities. These are "keyed" into the system in a similar fashion to inquiry entries.

Selecting from the System

At institutions as large and as complex as Penn State, the range of use for a computerized prospect system is almost infinite—from differentiated mass mailings or lists for phone-a-thons to lists for alumni committees and academic department uses.

There are several "rules of thumb" for designing and using selects from the prospect file. First, the select process should be controlled in the admissions office to assure an appropriately managed student contact system. Second, a code system should be developed to identify each contact system or the use of each name every time a select is ordered. This provides an invaluable resource for follow-up and research. Third, on any one select, the number of variables should be kept to a minimum. Remember, many names on the file will have limited information and are lost when you increase the number of variables in a select.

Evaluation and Research

The potential for project evaluation, market research, and cost/benefit analysis through the use of a prospect file is almost unlimited. With a statistical package or even using straight counts, one can generate data for analysis. The most recent evolution of the Penn State system into an integrated on-line system will provide more extensive and efficient research capability.

Examples of potential research and analysis available through the implementation of a computerized prospect tracking system are:

- **Mass mailing results.** Assuming ability to perfectly interface with the applicant file, an institution can measure the impact of various mailing strategies on the applicant pool. Variations in mailing dates, sequencing, and packaging can compare for various population groups and the most effective strategies determined.
- **Market penetration.** Studies can be made of the market potential for new programs by analyzing student interest for specific academic programs in an institution's primary or targeted area.
- **Cost/benefit analysis.** By keeping accurate cost records, an admissions office can determine the cost per applicant for various mailing strategies. If accurate records can be maintained on prospect file for all prospect contacts, the cost per applicant for various combinations of student contacts can be determined, and the most effective and efficient combination of contacts determined.

Conclusion

The use of the Student Search Service can serve as a foundation for a comprehensive computerized prospect tracking system. An institution with computer resources and the desire to design a prospect tracking system will find the service an invaluable resource for its admissions office.

Penn State's experience with the prospect file has shown the such a system can provide the means to manage and control prospect names, minimize duplication, supply a basis for differentiation of prospect populations, and produce a valuable resource for evaluation and research.

About the Author

Glenn G. Carter is Associate Dean of Undergraduate Admissions at The Pennsylvania State University. His primary responsibilities include managing the recruiting/marketing activities of the Admissions Office. In his 18 years' tenure at Penn State, he has held numerous positions in Admissions and Continuing Education.

OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS: CAN THEY HELP YOUR DIRECT-MAIL CAMPAIGN?

A. William Young

How many consultants have contacted your admissions office in the last several years, saying they had the right list, the right way, and the right price to make your direct-mail program work? Most admissions offices probably have had numerous contacts. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of outside consultants? Can they work for you? The answers are "carefully" and "maybe."

Advantages and Disadvantages

The use of outside consultants has advantages and disadvantages. They may have experience, expertise, equipment, and people not readily available in your office. They also may be able to do a job in a hurry, which your admissions office might not be able to do, and still keep other important projects going. But they can have one major disadvantage—they *may* cost more.

When you consider the cost of an outside consultant group, you need to make sure that you consider the entire cost of running a direct-mail program on your campus. This cost includes computer time, materials, equipment, staff time, postage, and anything connected with the program. Compare this cost with the cost of a consultant before you decide whether or not a consultant is too expensive. Consultants could provide a cost effective way of expanding your recruiting program.

At Colorado School of Mines (CSM), we have used an outside consultant to handle our direct-mail program for the last three years. We believe that the program has been more successful and cost effective than programs we had run ourselves.

CSM is an engineering school that offers engineering and applied science programs in the minerals, energy, and petroleum engineering fields. We are one of only a few schools in this country to offer degrees in these fields. We are a small school with about 2,900 degree students (2,300 undergraduates and 600 graduate students), and we enroll about 400 new freshman students each year.

Our admissions process is selective. High school performance and aptitude tests are used to select those students who have a high potential for success. Nearly 70 percent of our freshmen graduate in the top 10 percent of their high school class, and the average SAT scores of entering freshmen are 540 verbal and 650 mathematics.

Hiring a Direct-Mail Consultant

Prior to the time we began using an outside consultant, we produced in-house our own direct mailings to prospective students. This program was not successful, either in terms of initial response from our mailing or in terms of enrolled students. For example, we mailed letters to 2,000 students and, typically, received less than a 10 percent response to the initial mailing. Of those responses, fewer than ten students applied and were accepted for admission, and only three of these students actually enrolled. In retrospect, we did not know what was wrong with our direct-mail program—we only knew it didn't work.

At about this same time, we were solicited by a consulting firm that specialized in direct mail. For no other reason than timing, we contacted the firm. We thought that maybe they knew something we didn't, and it wouldn't hurt to find out what they were offering. What they offered were results. Not promised, but predicted on the basis of their analysis of our program and the services they could provide. I called several schools with which this firm had worked and all confirmed the professionalism and competence of the firm and the results the firm produced for them. So we decided to hire the outside consultants.

Our contract with the consultant firm called for design and management of our entire direct-mail program. This included all materials, printing, computer services, mailing services, text writing, and the timetable for processing and mailing. We worked closely with the consultant firm during the entire process and reviewed all aspects of their work but, in essence, asked them to provide the expertise we felt we lacked to deal with several in-house problems:

1. The letter that we used, while informative and grammatically correct, simply wasn't an attention getter. It didn't "push the right buttons" for the student and stimulate his or her interest; nor did we have anyone who could write that type of letter effectively.
2. Our direct-mail package was poorly designed. It looked like a collection of different pieces of information about our school rather than a comprehensive group of materials.
3. We could not handle a direct mailing to more than 1,500 to 2,000 prospective students because of limits imposed by the equipment and people we had on campus. To make direct mail an important part of our recruiting program, we needed to be mailing to 5,000 to 8,000 people.

Based on the recommendation of the consultant, our new direct-mail program was designed with the following elements:

1. All students to whom we mailed would be well qualified for admission in order to justify the cost and effort of the program. As individuals they would be selected via Student Search Service so that they had PSAT scores of at least 50 verbal and 60 mathematics and a high school average of 87 or higher. All of the students also would have expressed an interest in engineering or some particular program we offered.
2. Students would be contacted prior to their senior year, so the Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search would be used. We would time our mailing for May, so that the students would receive

information about our school before they finished their junior year.
3. A comprehensive direct-mail package would be designed by the consultant so that the materials fit together as a group. The focus of the package would be the letter the student received, with all letters individually addressed and referring to particular aspects of the student's background (high school, home state, major, etc.). An information sheet and return mail slip would be enclosed with the letter. All students who returned the slip would receive an application form, a personal letter, and more detailed information about CSM.

It is important to mention that we used our direct-mail program to contact students outside of Colorado. About 60 percent of our students come from Colorado, and we have an extensive recruiting program for Colorado residents. Our resources to contact and recruit nonresident students are limited and direct mail was intended to strengthen this effort. In the design of the direct-mail program, we selected students from twenty states that historically had sent the highest number of students to CSM.

Our available budget for the program was $9,000. This budget included all mailing materials, computer support and programing, letter printing, and mailing costs to prepare and mail letters to 5,000 students. We kept a detailed record of student names, responses received from the original mailing, and students who applied and enrolled. The results of the program are shown in the table.

Evaluation of the Program

Based on the success of the program in the fall of 1982 and 1983, we have continued with the same approach for the fall of 1984 and preliminary data for that year also are shown in the table. We believe that, in the last two years, our program has been successful by any measure, but we think it has been particularly successful when you consider the very select group of students we attempted to reach. They represent some of the best students in this country and those in whom a number of other prestigious colleges and universities also were interested.

In comparing the success of these last two years with the disappointing results of the previous two years, we believe that the single most important thing that was done to improve our direct-mail program was to design a better initial letter. Compared to the very general letter used in our first efforts, the one used in the last two years was much more personalized. This personal touch plus the ability of the Student Search Service to reach specific students with a high potential interest in CSM were the keys to our success.

In designing a direct-mail program, an admissions office should take several steps to make sure the program represents a good effort and is successful:

1. At the start, determine the maximum amount of money you are willing to spend. Then design the type of direct-mail approach you will use and determine the number of students you can contact. In general, it is better to mail a well thought out package to fewer students than to mail a poor package to more students.
2. Mail only to students in whom you have a real interest. Try to target a specific group rather than use a shotgun approach. Also try to identify the type of student who has a good chance of coming to your school. While you may want the best students possible, you may not be able to effectively compete for them.
3. If the results of in-house direct-mail programs are not satisfactory, consider using outside consultants. Don't make

DIRECT-MAIL RESULTS

	Entering Class of Fall 1982	Entering Class of Fall 1983	Entering Class of Fall 1984
Number of contacts through Student Search	5000	5000	5000
Number of responses	1017	928	878
Percent response	20%	19%	18%
Number of applicants	107	84	—
*Cost per applicant:			
Direct mail	$ 77	$ 97	—
Overall admissions office	$ 114	$ 109	—
Number of enrolled students	20	17	—
Cost per enrolled student:			
Direct mail	$ 411	$ 482	—
Overall admissions office	$ 398	$ 444	—
Total direct-mail costs	$9,000	$8,200	—

* Direct-mail costs cover all consultant charges plus all material costs. Overall admissions office costs include all salaries and operating expenses.

the assumption that consultants are going to be too expensive. They *may* be, but you should decide that *after* a careful analysis of your real on-campus costs. Consultants may not seem so expensive when you are trying to plan the fall travel schedule, organize the new student orientation, and cover for the last of the summer vacation schedule at the same time your direct-mail program should be sent out. And remember, you may be buying expertise that is not available on your campus.

4. Keep careful and detailed records of costs and response in order to evaluate the program. It makes little difference how you do it, whether by computer, hand, or other method. Do not assume direct mail is good for your college or university simply because it worked somewhere else.

Now that our direct-mail program is fairly well established, we are trying several things that we have not done in the past. These include a different timing for the initial mailing (August instead of May) and follow-up methods such as high school visits, and second mailings. Some of these, such as the newly scheduled initial mailing, are being handled by our consultant. Others, such as high school visits and follow-up mailings, will be done in-house. We will evaluate these changes next fall to see what effect they have on our program.

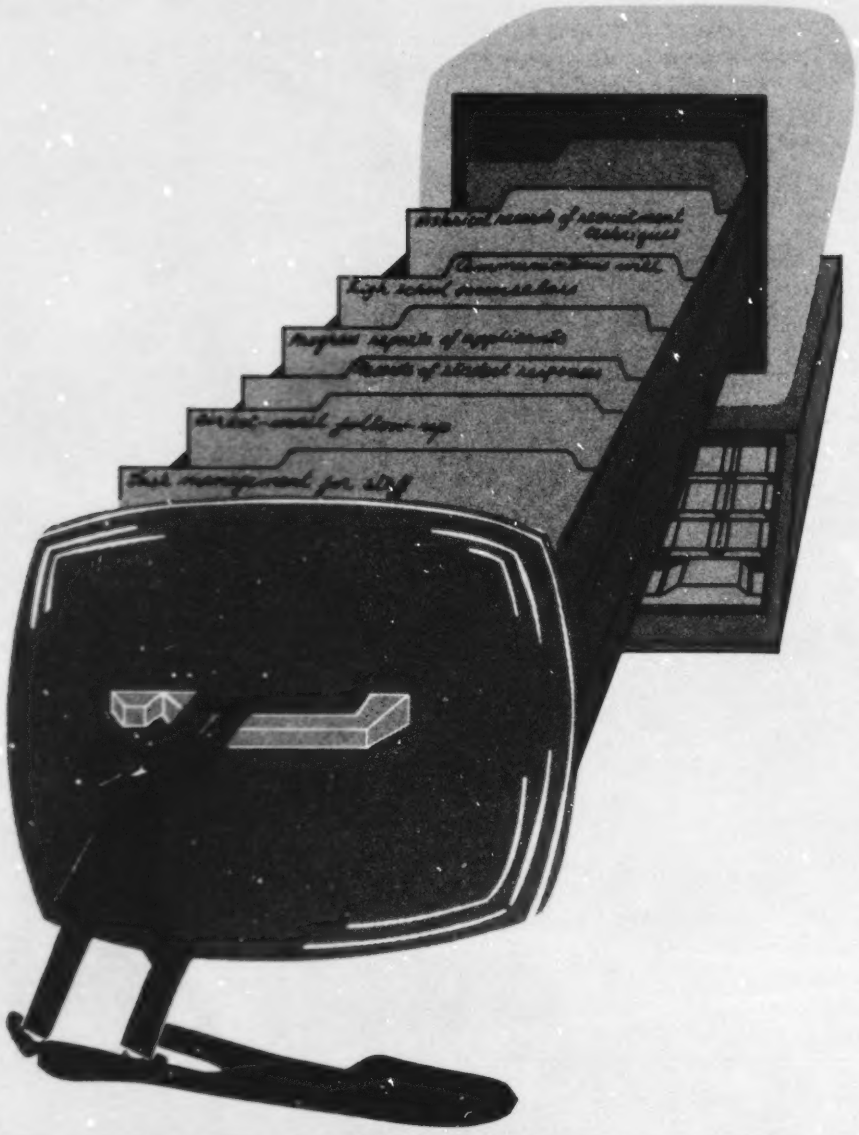
We will continue to use an outside consultant because of our successful experience and our belief that direct mail can provide an effective means of reaching potential students. But any direct-mail program must be managed well and properly evaluated to determine if it works effectively.

About the Author

A. William Young has been Director of Admissions at Colorado School of Mines since 1974. Previously, he had several years of industrial experience with the Proctor and Gamble Company.

COMPUTERIZED MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Larry L. Smith



How many times have you or a member of your staff used the word *unique* to describe your college? (I remember one employee who said that our school was "unique" 24 times during a 20-minute college night presentation!) The fact is that our colleges *are* unique, and each one of us has something special to offer the prospective student.

Unfortunately, instead of investigating the "uniqueness" of a college, most students choose a college for the following reasons:

- strong academic reputation
- graduates get good jobs
- good financial aid/scholarship program
- institutional type (private, public, church related, etc.)
- graduates go to top graduate schools

Nutshell Recruiting Philosophy—The "Uniqueness Factor"

Of course, these are not the only reasons for selecting a college, but obviously they do make good sense. This list illustrates that most of the time colleges are compared in a similar manner and the "uniqueness factor" is seldom considered. It is the responsibility of the college's follow-up program to focus the attention of the prospective student on this special factor of the college.

A good definition of a *uniqueness factor* is that specific characteristic about your campus that few colleges can emulate. All of us have great faculty and outstanding facilities, but which of us have a Nobel Prize winner on the faculty, an electron microscope in the science building, a sophomore Miss America, or a personal computer in every dorm room? Perhaps the "uniqueness" of having a computer in every dorm room is that special something that does set your college apart from other schools. Therefore, as you are recruiting a specific segment of the student population according to your marketing research, consider how you can place your "uniqueness factor" in front of your market.

Proper Management of Follow-up

As an admissions officer at Texas Wesleyan College, I have come to believe that, so often during our recruitment efforts, the bottom line is how my office compares with another school's admissions office. Many times my admissions counselor is in direct competition with a counselor from another college. Just visit a high school night program and you will clearly see the impressions left by the college reps. Unfortunately, an admissions counselor can talk only to a small percentage of prospective students. This means that the use of direct-mail follow-up is the main instrument for marketing a college.

Direct mail as well as correct use of your staff must be properly managed. The right person at the right time saying the right thing to the right prospective student should be the goal of every admissions manager who participates in marketing his or her college. Anything less than this objective probably will result in partial success. Since an admissions officer cannot speak to every prospect, it is the responsibility of the admissions manager to have the right *follow-up* at the right time doing the right thing to the right prospective student.

Let's say you need to recruit a freshman class of 500. Generally, most experts would agree that an applicant pool of 1,000 is needed to support such a class, plus or minus 10 to 15 percent. This means a prospective student pool of about 20,000 would be needed in order to generate 1,000 applicants. Therefore, using these numbers for discussion's sake, it is the admissions officer's responsibility to massage 1,000 applicants out of 20,000 prospects. Sounds simple? At Texas Wesleyan, we need all the help our insufficient budgets can produce, as well as valuable experiences along the way, a little divine inspiration, and of course, our computerized follow-up management system.

Even though I should be able to control everything that happens to my 20,000 prospects, I cannot hope to monitor all of the marketing strategies and record each student's response to our strategies. Our computer is capable of running our entire recruitment management system. It takes up only about 20 megabytes of space when standing alone and about 80 megabytes when working with 20,000 prospective students. Its data base includes approximately 600 data elements derived from a composite of items retrieved from the Student Data Questionnaire, Student Profile Report, and items initiated by the college. Our computer also controls information received by the financial aid office and the housing office and manages all forms of communication with new students. It can be programmed for approximately 150 tasks, such as producing progress reports on the application status of prospects, sending birthday cards to high school counselors, telling the word processor to send a letter from the premed advisor to a prospective premed student because 30 days have passed since the initial contact, and reminding admissions counselors that 15 days have passed since that prospective student received an admissions packet and it is time to give the student a phone call.

Our computer is able to tell which one of our prospects is most likely to enroll so that we can design a separate marketing plan for this high priority prospect and perhaps target this student for one-on-one recruitment. It also keeps us informed of the progress that the staff is making with prospects because it keeps a precise historical record of the type of contact as well as the date of the contact. Since the 1982 installation of our computer follow-up system, freshman enrollment has increased by

TEXAS WESLEYAN COLLEGE DAILY TASK LIST RECRUITING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

PROGRAM ID: TASKLIST.CO
REPORT ID: TASKLISTSTRPT

FOR: SANDY SMITH

RUN ON: 3/07/84 PAGE 1
AT: 16:15

TASK: D10 MAKE ADMISSION DECISION: TAKE NAME TO FACULTY ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE FOR A DECISION

CODE	LAST NAME	PREFERRED NAME	PHONE NUMBER	STUDENT ID	TASK COMPLETE	CATEGORY CODE	MORE INFO REQUESTED	APPEARED ON DAILY LIST
0					[X]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[X]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[X]	3/07/84
0					[X]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[X]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84

TASK: E01 LETTER WITH DEPARTMENT DECISION PACKET: SIGN LETTER, STUFF WITH DEPARTMENT DECISION PACKET, AND MAIL

CODE	LAST NAME	PREFERRED NAME	PHONE NUMBER	STUDENT ID	TASK COMPLETE	CATEGORY CODE	MORE INFO REQUESTED	APPEARED ON DAILY LIST
0					[ ]	[ ]	[X]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[X]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[X]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[X]	3/07/84

TASK: E10 LETTER TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF FEE PAYMENT: SIGN LETTER, STUFF WITH ORIENTATION SCHEDULE, AND MAIL

CODE	LAST NAME	PREFERRED NAME	PHONE NUMBER	STUDENT ID	TASK COMPLETE	CATEGORY CODE	MORE INFO REQUESTED	APPEARED ON DAILY LIST
0					[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[X]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[X]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[X]	[ ]	[ ]	3/07/84
0					[ ]	[ ]	[X]	3/07/84

a total of 72 percent, based on marketing information. The freshman class of 1983 is the largest since 1966 and has the highest SAT/ACT scores in the school's 90-year history.

Every morning, our computer produces a "task list" (page 48) for employees so that they may approach their jobs systematically rather than with the "squeaky-wheel-gets-the-grease" philosophy. At the end of the day, employees involved in that day's projects return the task list to the computer, with each task noted as completed, in-progress, or incomplete. The computer automatically carries over the in-progress or incomplete tasks to the next day, with a gentle reminder to employees to complete these jobs before starting new projects. Currently, we have plans to additionally use the computer's skills to manage such tasks as fund-raising programs, alumni relations, certain aspects of current student affairs activities, operation and maintenance departments, and student billing.

Colleges Don't Follow Up

Last spring, I took an informal survey of Student Search users and found that, after the primary contact is made with the student, few colleges follow up with second contacts. The quality of most follow-up attempts is pretty poor. What if a college had an automated system that uses its magnetic tape of Search prospects over and over again?

Controlling Your Enrollment Destiny

A computer system can provide the management support so that you can actually coordinate all aspects of your marketing plan. Very little is lost to chance and you control your own enrollment destiny.

Many times, enrollment suffers because at some time someone fails to coordinate the recruitment process and the director of admissions is the last to find out about it (usually *after* fall registration). Once you have accurately selected marketing targets, it is a shame to waste the effort with a hit-and-miss strategy. Since colleges are competing with each other, they must know what they are searching for, and once the proper market segment is identified, a carefully controlled management system should be in place.

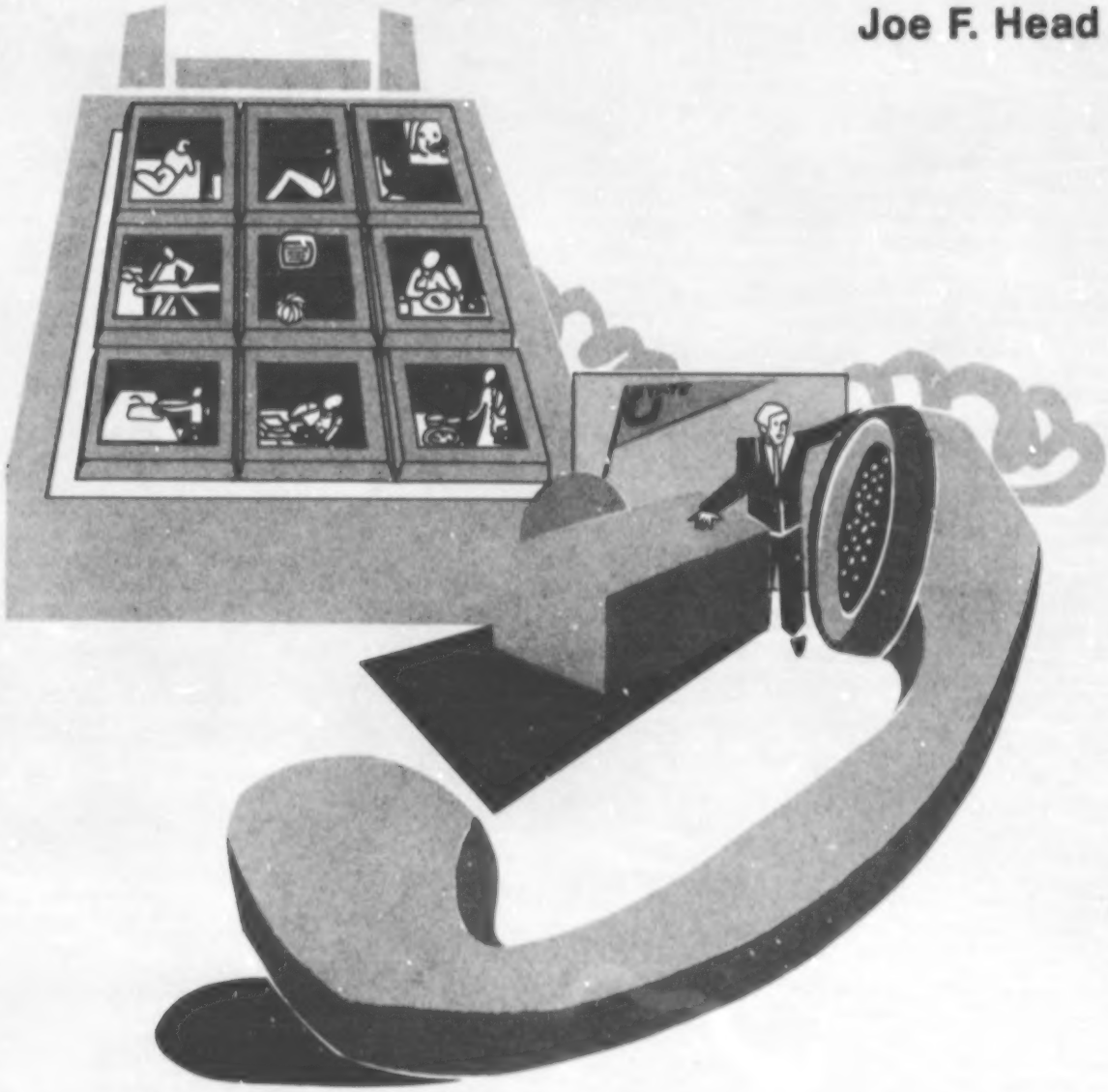
The admissions recruitment profession has outgrown the manual, slow, and error-prone method of student recruitment. Even the best in our field can't monitor everything that impacts on a prospective student. We may keep their names, addresses, etc., on our computers, but how many of us have the ability to manage all aspects of our marketing program? When you are concerned with the quantity and/or quality of your applicants, don't allow outside, uncontrollable variables to decide your recruitment program's destiny, but rather, look at your own management of your follow-up program.

About the Author

Larry L. Smith is serving his third year as Dean of Admissions/Financial Aid at Texas Wesleyan College. He has served as President of the Great Plains Association of College Admissions Counselors and on the Publications/Research Committee and the Governmental Interrelation Committee of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors. He also has consulted for numerous colleges concerning student recruitment management systems.

USING PHONE-A-THONS: A HOTLINE TO ENHANCE YOUR RECRUITMENT

Joe F. Head



The Admissions' telephone is standard equipment and frequently in use. However, its use as a recruitment tool can be greatly improved if designed within the marketing scheme. Recruitment phoning to individuals is not entirely new to collegiate admissions. The recent expansion of telecommunications and skyrocketing travel costs have given new dimensions to its use within the admissions office. The "phone-a-thon" is but one example of alternative recruitment. The *recruitment phone-a-thon* may be defined as a concentrated multiphone blitz directed at an identified segment of the student population over a selected period of time. When paired with the returns from inquiry cards from Student Search mailing or an equally reliable automated inquiry pool, the phone-a-thon has proven to be a strongly competitive marketing tool.

Organizing a Phone-A-Thon

The local telephone company should be contacted to arrange temporary installation of several phones if a suitable facility does not already exist. Phone-a-thon volunteers should be selected in accordance with the Search objective, such as recruiting female engineering students or minority students. The actual phone blitz should occur approximately three to four weeks after the mailing to allow for sufficient returns. The objective of the phone-a-thon is to reinforce applicants and convert inquiries into applicants. The duration of the phone-a-thon may vary but typically should be conducted in the evening hours of Monday through Thursday.

Phone-a-thon volunteers should be instructed to make reference to the prospect's initial request to participate in the Search program. (But they should remember that it was the student who provided the phone number to the college, not the Student Search Service.) This personal two-way conversation builds valuable rapport that qualifies the contact even further. Carefully drafted letters should follow positive phone actions. An added touch would be to allow the volunteer's signature to appear on the follow-up phone-a-thon letters.

Results

When properly launched from an advance Student Search mailing, phone-a-thons can be highly productive and cost effective. Results from one pilot project at a small private southern college yielded an approximately *sixty-three* percent application increase over the same time period in the previous year, when a phone-a-thon was not used. In addition, equipment and installation costs were shared with another office, which conducted a similar project to solicit alumni contributions. As a result, direct and indirect costs were justified and equalized.

Two unexpected realizations upon the conclusion of the phone-a-thon were a 20 percent cost savings compared to average staff travel costs and better directed counselor follow-up priorities. The Student Search based phone-a-thon out-performed average recruiter field production by *five* applications to *two*. The phone-a-thon blitz proved to be a powerful vehicle that quickly and effectively touched the selected Student Search population in a personal fashion.

Once the recruitment objective is clear, the admissions officer may wish to develop a specialty brochure describing, for example, honors opportunities available to minorities and including a reply card that requests the student's phone number. Then he or she should write a Search program based on the given parameters and historical student body profile. Once the Student Search Service has confirmed the specifications through the volume projection system and the number of potential candidates, a schedule can be set for a Search mailing, printed matter, and follow-up phone-a-thon.

Preferably the mailing should include an application, specialty brochure, and personal letter to each prospect referring to their Search participation. Replies should be given immediate attention with carefully composed letters to reinforce the type of response.

Evaluation of the Technique

In retrospect, the phone-a-thon holds both positive and negative consequences. It is a means of convenient, direct, and rapid communication when compared to field activities. But if improperly used, it can be costly and regarded by students as an instrument of intrusion.

Positive Features	Negative Features
• alternative recruitment in nontravel seasons	• evening hours schedule
• campus/office based convenience	• cost risk alternative
• cost-effective alternative	• inadvertent misrepresentation
• personal, direct contact/one-on-one voice follow-up rapport	• hit or miss contacts
• flexible conditions	• hard sell image/stigma
• accelerates seasonal returns	• idle equipment in nonproductive hours

The search for improved recruitment techniques will continue in light of the economy, competition, and market trends. Commercial services and technology already play a significant role in college recruiting. Alternative recruitment methods, such as phone-a-thons, are an innovative approach to retooling traditional recruitment practices.

About the Author

Joe F. Head is Director of Recruitment and School Relations at Georgia Southern College. He is the author of Phone Power for College Admissions and the Communications Explosion *and currently is pioneering the use of video recruitment in college admissions.*

COURTING MERIT SCHOLARS: "MIZZOU'S" STRATEGY WORKS

Greg D. Martin
Georgeanne B. Porter

Most admissions professionals agree that while direct mail campaigns for student recruitment are effective, they are also expensive. We know that a good direct mail campaign helps us reach the prospective student with valuable information about our institution, but our budgets require that we make some choices. Whom do we wish to reach? What kind of information does the student want, and how can we supply it? Market analysis, targeting, cost studies, and tracking all help us to define the limits within which our direct mail efforts will be most productive, but these activities also require valuable staff time and money.

Ironically, the comprehensive services offered by the College Board complicate our situation: Student Search inevitably presents more possibilities for direct mail campaigns—more features and numbers of students—than a university can afford to use effectively. Of these many options offered by Student Search, the University of Missouri-Columbia uses the Spring Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) Search. And while ours is a very restricted use aimed at a very specific group of students, successful application to a much more general population certainly is possible.

The University of Missouri-Columbia (UMC) targets high scorers on the PSAT/NMSQT because recruiting top performers in the National Merit scholarship competition is an important effort on our campus involving admissions, alumni, and the Honors College. We are able to target through Search by setting high test-score parameters. In recent years "Mizzou" has financed scholarships for about 140 of some 175 Merit scholars and about 10 of some 20 Achievement scholars who attend the university. UMC accomplished this in 1983-84 at a total cost of $125,000 (see the table).

The university's effort to court potential Merit scholars begins with a two-step mailing. The process teams the Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search magnetic tape with the university's computer system to provide students increasingly detailed information about their academic interest areas. Although this system was developed initially for corresponding with students whose names were supplied by Student Search, we now have successfully expanded it to handle virtually all of the admissions office's general requests for information.

Goals Used to Develop the Mailing Strategy

Highly motivated students value specific and detailed information about their intended academic major. Since an important feature of the Search tape option is that it supplies the student's interest area, we wanted to fulfill the student's expectation for specific information as well as make full use of the tape.

Since Merit students receive voluminous quantities of recruiting literature, the university hoped to distinguish its correspondence by:

- aiming for an early recognition of the student's achievement, perhaps the first he or she received from a college
- personalizing all correspondence by address, signature, and student's academic interest area
- measuring the response to the mailing and obtaining more detailed follow-up information
- monitoring postage and labor costs

The Process—A Two-Step Mailing Strategy

Even though we limited our selection parameters to students from Missouri and surrounding states, our Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search provided us with over 5,000 names. Our goals made the project ideally suited to computer use because sending a quick response to students and highlighting the diversity of our 200 academic programs suggested considerable automation.

Volume limited the material we could send and thereby determined our two-step strategy. Since expense and limited supplies prohibited our sending a four-color viewbook to all 5,000 names, we developed an economical *first letter* that supplied general information about the university and invited a response. The second letter, a follow-up to students who responded to the first, provided more information about the student's academic interest and was accompanied by a viewbook. An im-

TOTAL NATIONAL MERIT/ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARS ENROLLED AT UMC

Year	Number
1983-84	196
1982-83	203
1981-82	195
1980-81	179
1979-80	167

UMC'S SPECIFIC COURSE INFORMATION

SPEECH AND DRAMATIC ART-SPEECH COMMUNICATION
EXAMPLE COURSE OF STUDY

FIRST YEAR

English Composition or Elective	Foreign Language II
Foreign Language I	College Algebra or Elective
American History	American Government
Voice and Articulation	General Psychology
	Introduction to Speech Communication

SECOND YEAR

Advanced Foreign Language	English Exposition
General Botany	Principles of Geology
Great Speakers	Interpersonal Communication
English Literature	Appreciation of Art

THIRD YEAR

English Literature	Group Communications
Twentieth Century America	Introduction to Philosophy
General Sociology	American Literature
Persuasive Speaking	Communication in Organizations
Contemporary American Speakers	Psychosocial Aspects of Speech

FOURTH YEAR

Principles of Rhetoric	Age of the Federalists and Jeffersonians
The Process of Speech Communication	Nonverbal Communication
General Economics	Elective
Argument and Advocacy	

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE UMC

portant feature of the two-step strategy was that it also allowed us to monitor the effectiveness of our initial contact with the students.

The First Letter—Sample Course of Study

The unique features of both mailings were the inclusion of specific course information about the student's academic interest area (pages 54 and 55) and assurance to the student that the program was available on our campus. The first letter:

- bore the signatures of the chancellor and the director of the Honors College
- included one-page sample programs of study illustrating coursework required for the student's chosen academic area
- included associated job titles and job descriptions in that academic area.

To supply these sample programs, the admissions office developed a data base containing semester-by-semester coursework for every undergraduate program on the campus. Each program may be accessed individually from a CRT and printed on the university's IBM 6670 laser printer; but for the purposes of the Spring PSAT/NMSQT Search mailing, we matched the academic classification on the tape to corresponding majors on the campus. When the computer picked up the name and address of the student in the personalized salutation on the letter, it also ordered up sample program(s) corresponding to the student's academic interest. One challenge we encountered in supplying the student with detailed academic information was matching actual academic offerings to the College Board's program choices. Clearly, our method would be less successful for a small school with limited program offerings; however,

UMC'S SPECIFIC COURSE INFORMATION

RADIO-TELEVISION NEWS
EXAMPLE COURSE OF STUDY

FIRST YEAR

Science with Lab
Foreign Language
English Composition
Humanities or Social Science
Elective

Foreign Language
American Government
Science
Humanities
Elective

SECOND YEAR

Foreign Language Reading
English Exposition
General Economics
Science
Humanities

Science
History
Humanities
Elective

THIRD YEAR

History and Principles of Journalism
Introduction to Broadcast News
Broadcast Reporting
General Semantics in Journalism
Broadcast Public Affairs

Mass Media and Society
Communications Law
Radio Reporting and Editing
Television News Production
Television Seminar

FOURTH YEAR

News
Television Reporting and Editing
Station Management
Journalism as Communication
Reporting

Advertising Principles and Practices
Broadcast Advertising
Public Relations
Television News Photography
Law and the Courts
Senior Assembly

Definition of Career Field
The required courses in the broadcast department give the student the skills to work in any radio or television newsroom. In as much as the B.J. is in journalism and not in broadcasting, the graduate will also be acquainted with the techniques of writing and editing for print and with the principles of advertising. There are many job opportunities in the sales and business side of the broadcasting industry.

UMC Program Emphasis
A major asset in UMC's broadcast program is the student's opportunity to gain practical experience as a part of education. The newsrooms of KBIA-radio and KOMU-TV are staffed by journalism students and professors.

Representative Job Titles and Related Career Areas
TV/Radio Reporter, TV/Radio Assignment Editor, Producer or Director, and Media Buyer.

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM UMC

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

Office of the Director of Admissions
and Registrar
130 Jesse Hall
Columbia, Missouri 65211
882-2456

May 5, 1983

David Gawrys
63-17th Avenue
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

Dear David:

Thank you for indicating you would like to learn more about the University of Missouri-Columbia. We appreciate your interest in UMC and hope you will find the enclosed application material informative. Under separate cover we are forwarding a Mizzou booklet to give you more detailed information about the campus and its educational opportunities.

Your interest in communications might lead you to a degree in the world's oldest School of Journalism, located on our campus. UMC's Departments of Speech and Dramatic Art and of English also offer extensive degree programs. Any of these degrees might prepare you for a career in communications. For more information about these degree offerings, you may wish to contact the Assistant Dean's Office, School of Journalism, 100 Neff Hall, or the College of Arts and Science, 210 Jesse Hall, UMC, Columbia, Missouri 65211.

We hope this information will help you. If you would like to see Mizzou firsthand, we encourage you to write to or call our School and College Relations Office (314-882-2456). Our staff in 219 Jesse Hall will be happy to visit with you and arrange for you to see the campus.

If you have further questions or if we may be of assistance, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Georgeanne B. Porter

Georgeanne B. Porter
Assistant Director of Admissions
219 Jesse Hall

sh
Enclosure

we felt our method highlighted the huge variety our campus offers. We also programmed the capability to print the sample programs on both sides of a single sheet of paper, so that if a student had two academic interests, he or she could receive information about both without our paying additional postage for excess weight.

The Second Letter—Variable Paragraphs

A surprising number of students digested the extensive information about admissions, housing, scholarships, Honors College, and UMC's Merit Scholarships included in the first letter and replied to request either more information on campus or a campus visit. A second letter (page 56) was sent to these students, which:

- was a single page
- was more succinct
- bore the signature of the director of admissions
- included a variable paragraph in the body of the letter, which discussed the student's specific question

The data base includes over a hundred different paragraphs covering academic interest areas and typical questions. These variable paragraphs are an extremely effective mechanism for personalizing replies, and they help students clarify the complexities of some of their academic choices. For instance, a variable paragraph might explain that a meteorology program goes by the name of *atmospheric science* on our campus, or it might explain that Missouri residents have priority for admission to a certain academic program.

Results

Even though our monitoring was informal, we did have some unexpected forms of feedback that encouraged the staff involved in this project. The number of students who responded to the first letter was much larger than anticipated. We felt this validated our assumption that an early communication would be most effective. The responses were detailed; they pinpointed specific areas of concern and indicated that the students had carefully studied the sample programs. These responses also were very gratifying because they frequently mentioned aspects of the mailing that had impressed them, i.e., the personalization, the volume of information supplied, the specific information about their major. One student even said that she wished us to contact her, and that while she had received information from more than 50 schools, ours was the only one to which she was releasing her phone number. (Students communicated an important message that colleges planning direct mail campaigns might wish to take note of: repeated contacts can be interpreted as harassment, since these students are deluged with college information.)

Visits to campus increased sharply after the first mailing. Many visitors arrived on campus with their letter in hand and commented that, of the many schools from which they had heard, UMC differed by offering substantive information that they had kept for ongoing advisement. We used this group to obtain further feedback. Comments included:

- "From the sample program I have a better idea of what engineering [or science, art, etc.] entails."
- "This letter really *said* something."
- "I didn't even know you had an honors program."
- "Your letter really personalized the 'big university' for me; I actually talked to the person who signed this letter."

Parents who were worried about the lack of advisement at a large public institution commented that they were impressed that UMC was the first institution to respond in an informative, factual manner, quickly and with an amazing degree of immediacy and personalization.

A further result of the effort was its extension to other correspondence of the admissions office. A similar letter and sample program (with application enclosed) now answers the vast majority of our general requests. This system has freed up immense staff time; general mail now can be handled by competent work-study students using a CRT and a manual of academic program information. The same benefits of economy, speed, and personalization now apply to our general correspondence as well as to recruitment of potential Merit scholars.

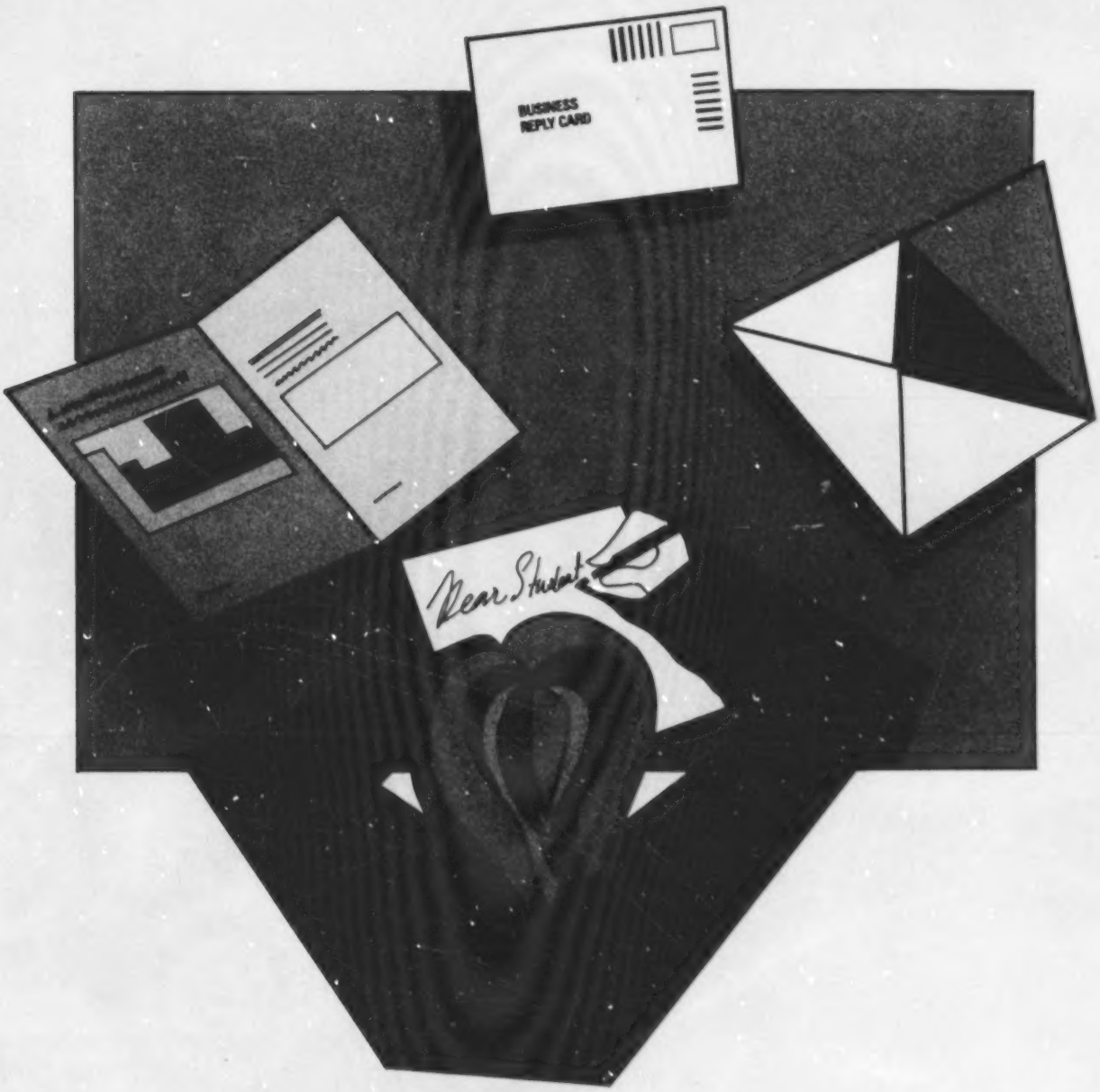
About the Authors

Georgeanne B. Porter is Assistant Director of Admissions at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Recently she was selected to be author of the AACRAO World Education Series Volume on Germany.

Greg D. Martin is former Assistant Director of Admissions, University of Missouri-Columbia. Presently he is Marketing and Business Manager of University of Missouri Press.

BUILDING A DIRECT-MAIL PACKAGE: CONTENT AND FORMAT

Kristine MacDermott



In an era of declining enrollments and sophisticated recruitment marketing, direct mail has emerged as one of the primary methods for contacting prospective students. Many admissions personnel, unfamiliar with the nature of such direct-marketing tools, approach their development with apprehension. Yet it is not necessary to be a direct-mail expert to compose a well-written, successful direct-mail piece.

The facets of an effective direct-mail campaign are extensive and complex—research, format, content, timing, cost, and analysis of returns. The development of the format and content includes four steps: choosing a workable, appealing format; determining the scope of the direct-mail piece; keeping the audience in mind; and using all available resources to provide the best information.

Choose a Format

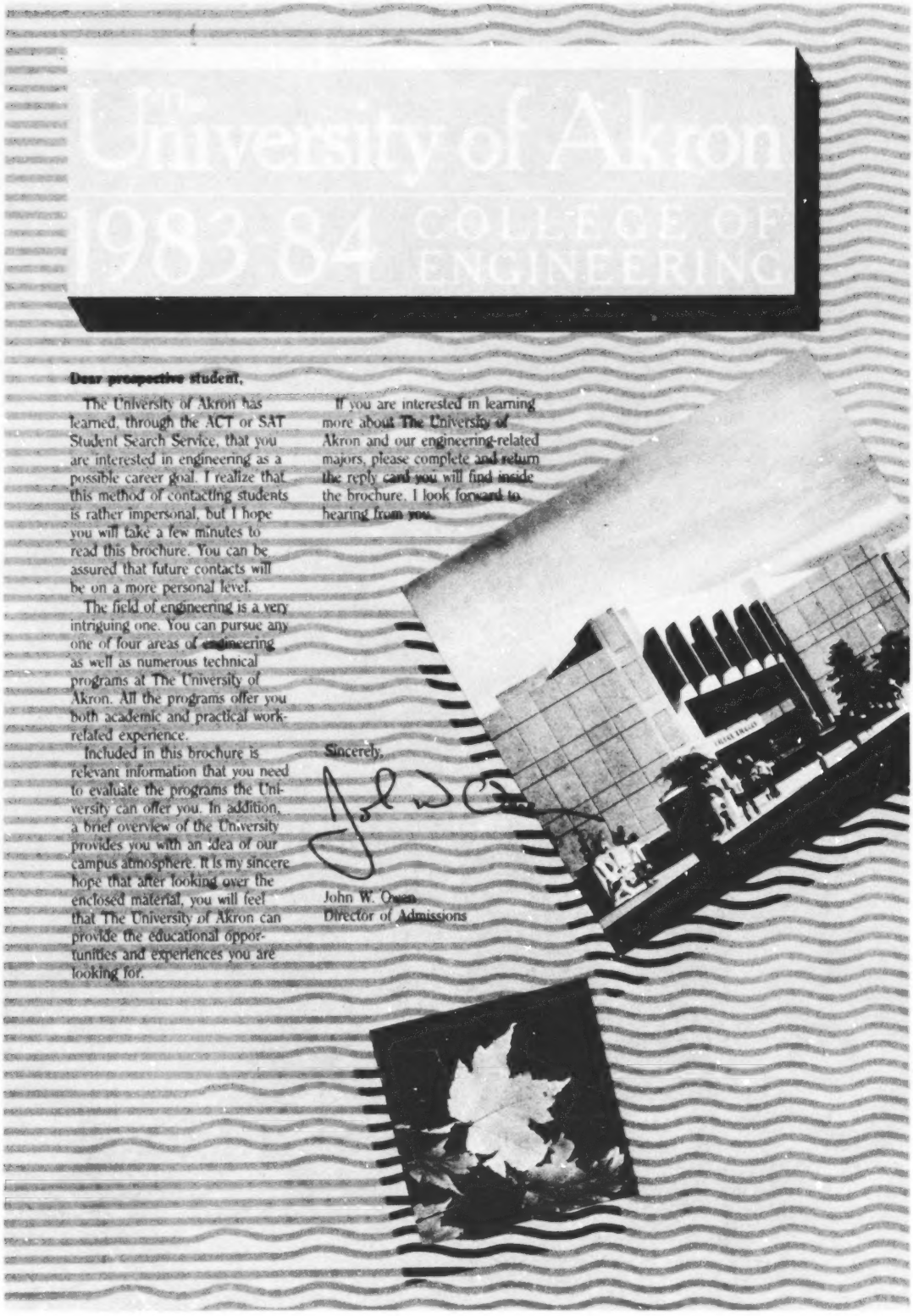
The combination of letter, brochure, response card, and envelope has long been praised as the most effective direct-mail package. For many colleges and universities, as well as private businesses, that still holds true. However, those components shaped into a slightly different format have proven equally as effective and, at the same time, more cost efficient.

For the admissions office on a tight budget, the costs of producing each of those components individually can be prohibitive. You may find equal success with a self-mailer that begins with a letter, includes pertinent information in the style of a brochure, and closes with a response card. In the direct-mail program at the University of Akron, we employ a self-mailer format that

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER IN CONSTRUCTING A DIRECT-MAIL PIECE

- Don't be afraid to develop a nontraditional format, but build in elements of the classical mailing package. Use your imagination to adapt old standards. You may find a new method that will be uniquely your own.
- The information should flow logically and in a style that is easy to read.
- As you begin the letter, identify within the first two paragraphs the intent and benefits.
- Write in a style that will involve the prospect in the message. If the first few paragraphs are written concisely and to create interest, the reader will stick with you to the end.
- When you select a self-mailer, you obviously eliminate the option of a personalized letter. Many will try to persuade you that personalized letters *always* outpull nonpersonalized ones. In some cases that is true. Remember, individualized letters must increase response enough to pay for the extra expense of personalization.
- To determine the most effective style, do some testing. Design a self-mailer as well as a personalized traditional package and use your response percentages to analyze effectiveness and cost efficiency. Over several years of mailing and analyzing responses, the University of Akron's self-mailer has produced a 10 to 15 percent response rate. This indicates that our format is working.
- Relay the body of information that describes your institution as you would tell a story or as though you were drawing a picture. It is essential to tell the student enough to catch his or her interest but not every detail. Remember, when you receive the response card, you must be able to return some new information to the student. Much of your story can be told through photographs.
- Prospects can get a brief overview of what is expected of them by reading the response card; therefore, many begin as well as end there. The more formal the appearance of your response card, the more appealing it will be, making prospects think it is too important to discard.
- Overall, include the elements described above that have proven track records in creating and holding attention; then, adapt those elements to a style and format that appropriately represents the position and image of your institution.

COVER OF UNIVERSITY OF AKRON'S RECRUITMENT BROCHURE


The University of Akron
1983-84 COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Dear prospective student,
The University of Akron has learned, through the ACT or SAT Student Search Service, that you are interested in engineering as a possible career goal. I realize that this method of contacting students is rather impersonal, but I hope you will take a few minutes to read this brochure. You can be assured that future contacts will be on a more personal level.
The field of engineering is a very intriguing one. You can pursue any one of four areas of engineering as well as numerous technical programs at The University of Akron. All the programs offer you both academic and practical work-related experience.
Included in this brochure is relevant information that you need to evaluate the programs the University can offer you. In addition, a brief overview of the University provides you with an idea of our campus atmosphere. It is my sincere hope that after looking over the enclosed material, you will feel that The University of Akron can provide the educational opportunities and experiences you are looking for.
If you are interested in learning more about The University of Akron and our engineering-related majors, please complete and return the reply card you will find inside the brochure. I look forward to hearing from you.
Sincerely,
John W. Owen
Director of Admissions

includes all of the elements of the traditional package. (The photo shows the cover of a self-mailer with the opening text of the letter.)

Determine the Scope

Depending on the size of your institution and the variety of your academic programs, the focus of the mailing may differ. Are you trying to describe your entire college or university, or trying to attract quality students to a particular program? How will you accomplish your purpose visually? Can the copy be organized to lead the prospect to respond?

If you represent an institution with a population of over 15,000, it may be difficult to describe your entire school in specific enough terms so that your institution doesn't sound like one of many. In this instance, consider brochures that describe a particular major or college within the university. The University of Akron is a large state-supported institution, enrolling 26,000 students. Because of the size of our campus and extensiveness of our curriculums, we cannot employ direct mail as a mechanism to describe the entire university. Instead, it is the vehicle by which we attract specific students to specific programs. Each direct-mail piece centers on one academic program or a group of related academic programs.

If you represent a smaller institution, you may be able to use the brevity of a direct-mail piece to portray the atmosphere of the entire institution. Regardless of which approach you choose, be as specific as possible. Avoid statements that could describe any or every school, such as, "We have an outstanding faculty," or "Our engineering program is superior." Give your prospects a few details that will convince them of your outstanding faculty and superior program.

Know Your Audience

As prospect lists become more sophisticated in their selection criteria, use that sophistication to your advantage. The more familiar you become with the type of student you are seeking and the alternatives of selection, the easier it will be to compose a direct-mail piece geared for that audience. Above all, be realistic. If you are recruiting students for a selective institution or program that requires certain academic standards, then choose only those prospects whose credentials indicate they are qualified. No one benefits when a student is led to believe he or she can attend a school where his or her chances are not strong.

Because each of our brochures concentrates on a particular audience, we continually evaluate the criteria we use to select those audiences. Academic performance is an essential part of that information. By reviewing the qualities of students who are now successful in the different academic programs, we can determine a reasonable set of selection criteria. That way we are contacting only students who have the ability to succeed in a particular major at the University of Akron.

Adapt your content to the specific audience you are contacting. Direct mail gives you the advantage of sending a particular message to a select and appropriate group of prospects. That opportunity is best *fulfilled* with a message tailored to the needs of the audience. Develop a central theme that will flow and lead the reader through the information ultimately to respond. Answer the prospects' questions in advance. Most importantly, be concise and write in language that is understandable.

Use Available Resources

Within your particular college or university, there are individuals who are knowledgeable about many subjects you will want to include. This is especially true when composing direct-mail pieces about specific programs or academic areas. Your approach to using those resources can vary. By talking with faculty or administrators prior to writing, you can gain a new perspective on how to present the information. Their day-to-day familiarity with the information may help you describe programs or the institution with more clarity and brevity. After drafting the bulk of your copy, you can call on them to verify accuracy and suggest points you may have omitted. In this way, you gain insights into the presentation of the information that you otherwise would not have. If your brochure is a general introduction to your institution, othe sources of information are obvious—offices of financial aid, academic advising, placement, athletics, etc.

Arrange for student feedback. Ideally, a student focus group, representing the type of student you are trying to attract, should review the materials. If you do not have an organized program for a student critique of your publications, ask students working in your office for their impressions. Do they like the design? If is clear and understandable? Would they respond? Does anything about it stand out? What don't they like?

Conclusion

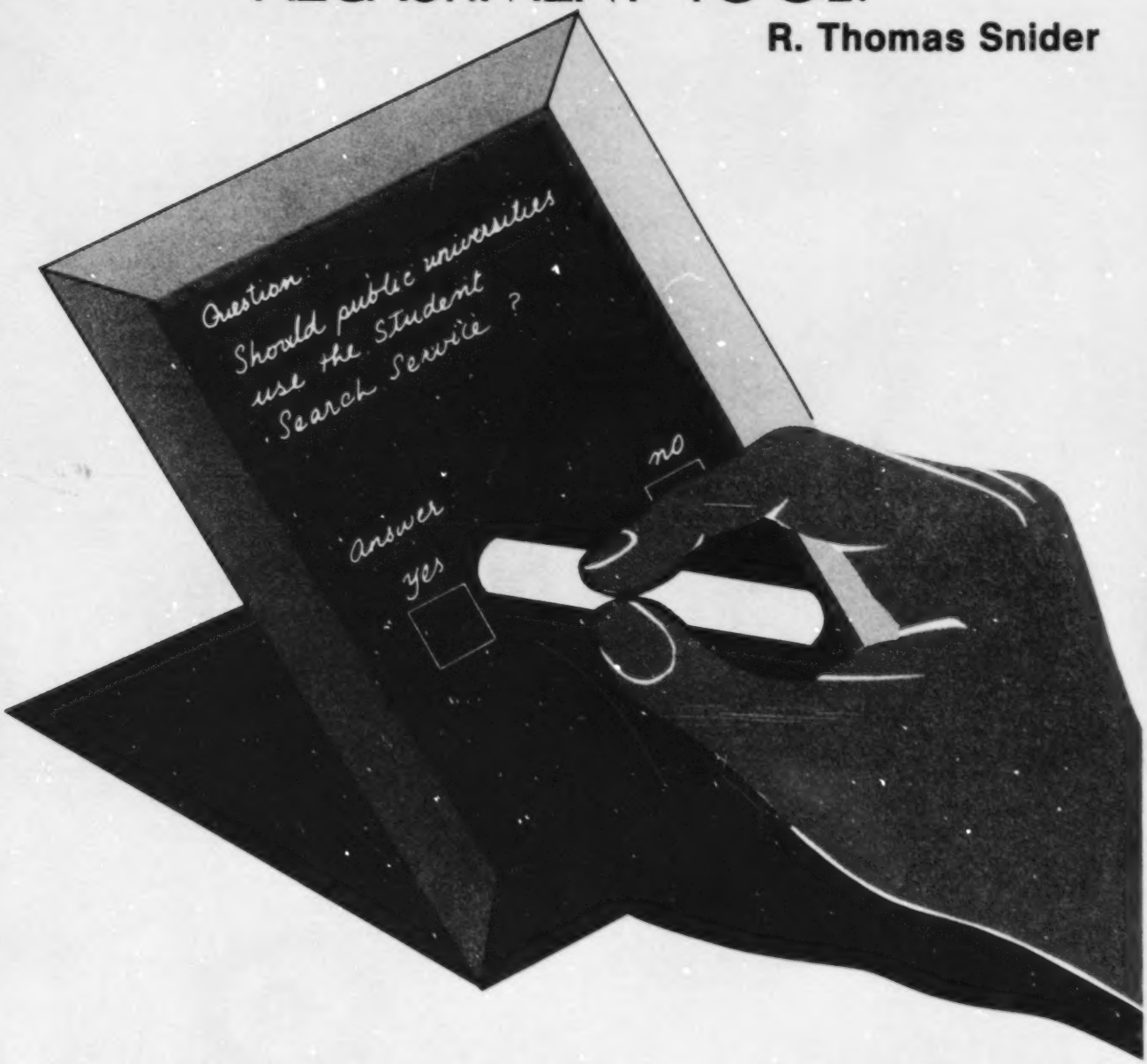
Successful direct-mail campaigns don't occur overnight. They include hours of planning, writing, and designing to create a workable and productive direct-mail piece. With perseverance, your reward will be numbers of quality students interested in your institution.

About the Author

Kristine MacDermott is Assistant Director of Admissions at the University of Akron, Akron, Ohio. Her responsibilities include counseling (travel, interviewing, and application evaluation), advertising, direct mail, and publications.

STUDENT SEARCH SERVICE: IS IT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY RECRUITMENT TOOL?

R. Thomas Snider



Yes! Public universities, like the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, are learning that recruiting tools such as Student Search are not the domain of private universities. In admissions, the words *public university* do not have to be associated with *impersonal*. Search can act as a catalyst for exciting projects and can change an admissions office in such a way that *public* is associated with *personal*.

Six years ago, UW Oshkosh ordered Student Search names. That was the best investment that the admissions office has made because it not only has increased the number of applications to the university, but it has acted as a catalyst for setting up an efficient and creative marketing plan.

The arrival of the Search tapes initiated the following:

1. automated prospect file
2. electronic tracking of each prospect activity for each prospective student
3. interfacing prospect file with that of the applicant file
4. cost-benefit analysis of each admissions activity
5. follow-up activities to increase the yield of prospect applicants
6. reduction of staff fear (both secretarial and admissions officers) working with computers

Is it hard to believe that Search can lead to the above? The cost of Search to the initial user or to the user who is dramatically increasing a Search order has to be justified. Therefore, an admissions staff is forced to think about some of these ways that Search can be used to justify its costs.

Automating the Prospect File

Prior to 1977, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh did not have a prospect file. It did have an on-line applicant file but literally threw away any prospect name once the need of that prospect had been met. The initial order of 26,000 Search names forced Oshkosh to determine how it would keep those names for the future. It would be awkward to maintain them on the original Search computer tapes since the format was not compatible with the informational needs of the office. Therefore, the computer committee designed a program that permitted those Search tapes to be received, stored, and accessed by the admissions office. In particular, UW Oshkosh stores the names on disk and its mainframe is an IBM 4341. This file has a unique on-line retrieval system, which has the capacity of 50,000 prospective student names. These prospects' names come from Search, as well as from mail, phone inquiries, college night/day fairs, etc.

Social security numbers are not always available for all student name sources because many prospective names are obtained from letters sent into the office, referrals, and lists (National Council of Teachers of English Awards, National Merit lists, etc.) that do not have social security numbers. Therefore, many institutions have had problems with retrieving prospective students' names and have a great number of duplicate names. This means that prospects are receiving duplicate recruitment mailings—an expensive effort that creates a bad impression with the prospect.

We have developed a retrieval system we call *SCAN*. By punching the first five letters of the last name of the individual, all students with that letter configuration come up on the screen. We place a marker next to the name that we want, push "enter," and immediately access that file. This method is foolproof and avoids duplication. Some universities use a retrieval system that is based on the last name, street address, city, and state. However, we found that to be highly inaccurate because the street address can be reported in many different ways (i.e., "RR" and "Rural Route," "N." and "North").

The *SCAN* system has made update easy and accurate. Also, when there is a telephone inquiry, we can update the file directly on the computer rather than write new information on paper. Both the receptionist and the central phone system controller have direct access to terminals without leaving their desks. The terminals are on turntables, which allows others to use them as well. This prospect system is built in such a way that any update produces the appropriate label or letter to be sent the following day.

Electronic Tracking of Prospects

Our prospect file allows us to keep track of the source of the prospect appearing on the file, all subsequent contacts, and all mailings to that student. This is a very important aspect of any prospect file. At the end of a recruiting year, we are able to determine what our key sources were for prospects and how those prospects converted into applicants.

When an application is received in our office, it is checked against the prospect file using *SCAN*. The prospect is inactivated—not cancelled—on the file. All the data that has been accumulated is kept for research purposes. The inactivation of the prospect is important because we have an automatic memo mailing system that is sent monthly to all prospects to remind them of approaching deadlines. We also have a network of alumni callers, who contact prospects to talk about the university. Therefore, it is vitally important that a prospect who has applied for admission be taken out of this system and moved into the application system as quickly as possible.

I hesitate to cost justify Search by how many of those students enroll. I believe that once a student has applied,

it is up to the rest of the marketing plan to convince the student to enroll. The success of Search should be measured by how many applications a university receives.

Integrating the Prospect File with the Applicant File

Our prospect file is integrated with our applicant system. We have developed a feature called *BOUNCE*, which allows the operator to push "enter" and move from the prospect screen directly to the applicant screen if the person has applied. If a university were building a total computer file from scratch, only one file should be built initially, whereby a name would be entered once and segments after the name would be reserved for prospect data, applicant data, enrolled data, and finally, alumni data. However, if an applicant file already exists and there is no space to add a prospect data segment, the *BOUNCE* feature is invaluable. It allows us to move from the prospect file to the applicant file, and vice versa, with ease.

Cost Analysis

Each year the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh receives 3,000 applications. A detailed analysis as to how the university received each application is very important. We traced each application from our prospect pool of 32,108. Of these, 22,630 never responded to any contact by the university, and 9,478 ("hard" prospects) responded to university contacts. Since we receive 3,000 applications each year, approximately 9 percent of our students from the total prospect file are converted into applicants.

The table shows major admissions activities ranked in the order of producing an application based on initial contact. Note that the PSAT/NMSQT Search produced 650 applicants to the university as an initial contact, or 31 percent of applicants traceable to our prospect file. This figure represents 21.7 percent of our total application pool.

Each of the activities is costed out and divided by the number of applications it produced. Decisions then are made about how to handle each activity in the future. PSAT/NMSQT Search costs us $6,639 each year (15,000 names). This includes costs for the PSAT original mailing piece, the follow-up mailing piece, postage, PSAT initial order, return postage, and the work study students to help with the mailing pieces. The cost for each Search-identified applicant is $9.70. This cost per applicant is low, and we believe that this is a strong cost-benefit ratio that cannot be ignored. Since many factors influence matriculation rates, we evaluate Search only to determine application rate.

Since our initial Search order of 26,000 names, we have cut our Search order down to 15,000 and still yield the same number of responses. We accomplished this by analyzing the yield of the 1980 and 1981 PSAT returns by zip code, academic interest, PSAT scores, and high school grade-point average. This cost analysis study enabled us to place an order that substantially reduced our cost but actually increased our yield, making our system truly effective. Presently, we have approximately a 22 percent yield (returned prepaid postcard for further information) from our combined mailings.

Follow-up Activities

After a Search project is completed, the following activities take place:

- **Visits to high schools.** We combine the number of students who returned a prepaid inquiry card from Search with our previous year's application volume to determine

ADMISSIONS ACTIVITIES IN RANK ORDER OF PRODUCING AN APPLICATION BASED ON *INITIAL* CONTACT

Title	Number of Applications	Percent of Applications Traceable to Prospect File	Percent of Total Applications
Spring PSAT/NMSQT	650	31.96	21.26
ACT	392	22.61	12.81
High school visits	178	10.27	5.81
Last year's prospects	117	6.75	3.82
Phone calls	113	6.52	3.69
Mail	112	6.46	3.66
College nights	88	5.0	2.87
Campus visits	71	4.0	2.32
SAT (score reports)	32	1.8	1.04
Workshop referrals	22	1.26	.71
Fairs	11	.63	.35
Viewbook (old)	8	.46	.26
Athletic referrals	5	.28	.16
Viewbook (new)	1	.05	.03
Miscellaneous	29	1.67	.94

which high schools we should visit. By visiting high schools where there is an interest, we have made our visiting program more effective. In particular, we produce computer labels and mail a postcard to every student to remind them when we will be at their high school. We also follow up with a note (automated) after the high school visit. This has increased the number of students seen in high schools by 20 percent (178 applicants are traceable to the high school visit being their initial contact).

- **National merit recruitment.** In our Search order, we segment a group that will most likely be *national merit finalists*. We particularly make sure that they have notices regarding our honors scholarship program, honors program, and our College-Level Examination Program Day.
- **Minorities.** One of our Searches involves only *minorities*. Since just 3 percent of Wisconsin's population are minorities, this is a difficult area of recruitment for Wisconsin universities. Therefore, it is important that our message be sent out to as many minority students as possible. The brochure that we send to minorities is the same as brochures we send to the rest of our prospects except for a variable panel that addresses the atmosphere on campus and the city of Oshkosh for a minority student. The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is seeking diversity, and this program has helped us grow in this regard in recent years. By making minority students aware of the benefits of our university through Search, we have increased our out-of-state minority applicants by 20 percent.

Reduce Computer Fear

Six years ago, the admissions office was using the computer as an application filing cabinet. Only a few secretaries knew how to input information; the amount of manipulation of applicant files by the professional staff was minimal. With the development of Search into online prospect and applicant files, the entire staff needed to have access to both files frequently. Therefore, all professional staff learned a high-level computer language called *EASYTRIEVE*, which allows each staff member to write computer programs for his or her own interest group activities.

The purchase of a microcomputer in the admissions office has greatly expanded possibilities for personalizing student contact. Special interest groups' names (minority honor students, athletes, etc.) can be stored and used by those professional staff assigned to that activity without needing a computer analyst to write a program. Very soon, the IBM personal computer will be able to act as a terminal so that programs can be written to access the large file, and then to dump special interest group files into the microcomputer. Those files then can be manipulated by VISICALC, VISIPLOT, and VISIFILE software programs.

Search, public, and *personal* are words that *can* be used in the same sentence because Student Search can be a catalyst to motivate staff to set up a very efficient marketing plan at public institutions.

About the Author

R. Thomas Snider is Director of Admissions at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. He has served as a consultant to the College Board and several colleges in the area of enrollment management.

The College Board Introduces Its New *Enrollment Planning Service*™

The College Board is offering an innovative new service designed to help colleges target their recruitment efforts, including their use of the Student Search Service, more effectively. The *Enrollment Planning Service* provides enrollment managers with previously unavailable information about potential applicants and their characteristics at a very early stage of the admissions process.

The service is responsive to the growing need of freshman enrollment planners for better information about college-bound students who might benefit from their programs. Geographic shifts in population, the expected decline in the numbers of traditional college-bound students, and the increasing costs of higher education all make it more difficult for colleges to locate students who might consider attending these colleges.

Known during its development as the Comprehensive Undergraduate Enrollment Planning Project (CUEPP), the *Enrollment Planning Service* has grown out of research begun in 1980 by the University of Pennsylvania's Higher Education Finance Research Institute (HEFRI), under the sponsorship of the College Board. The research effort was based on an analysis of the College Board's Admissions Testing Program (ATP) data using HEFRI's "market segment model." This model is described in detail in *The Structure of College Choice*, by Robert Zemsky and Penney Oedel, published in 1983 by the College Board.

During the new service's development, the College Board also received the help of many admissions practitioners who participated in advisory sessions, workshops, and other meetings held across the country.

Extensive Data Base

The ATP data base is the nation's most extensive on traditional college-bound students, containing information about the more than one million seniors who take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) each year. By analyzing where graduating high school seniors ask to have their SAT scores sent, the *Enrollment Planning Service* describes potential applicants' levels of interest in and awareness about different colleges. This information will help colleges locate their prime student market areas.

The *Enrollment Planning Service* provides a college with information about the overall student market by geographic region, including student group characteristics and competitive structure among institutions for each student segment; the college's own competitive position within the market by student segment; and three-year projections of college-bound seniors in each geographic market area. Because the information colleges receive is institution-specific on one hand and provides an overall view of the market on the other, it permits colleges not only to gain insight into their current condition but also to identify other types or locations of students they may have overlooked. Comparability of data from year to year will permit colleges to evaluate the results of their recruitment efforts over time.

During 1984, the *Enrollment Planning Service* will provide information on college-bound students in 23 states and the District of Columbia. These areas contain a large proportion of all high school graduates who take the SAT. In 1985, the service will provide data on SAT takers in all states.

In addition to the District of Columbia, the data in 1984 will cover SAT takers in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

Student Segmentation

Enrollment Planning Service data are based on the segmentation of the population of SAT takers in the 1984 graduating high school class. Each state is divided into geographic markets, the boundaries of which often match formal political and educational divisions. There are a total of 258 geographic market areas in the District of Columbia and the 23 states in the 1984 data base.

Each geographic market is further divided by classifying the SAT takers residing in that market into four segments, according to the geographic range of institutions to which they sent their SAT scores via the College Board.

- **Local students** concentrate on institutions in their own community.
- **In-state students** concentrate on colleges and universities within their home state.
- **Regional students** focus on institutions within their region.
- **National students** concentrate on colleges and universities outside their region.

When students register to take the SAT (or later, in supplemental requests), they designate institutions to receive their scores directly from the College Board. By doing so, students are demonstrating some level of interest in or awareness of those institutions. At that moment, those institutions are "visible" and of interest to the students, and it is at this point of awareness that institutions need to work toward converting student interest into choice.

Components of the Service

The service offers four components that can be purchased separately: a Basic Report, the Electronic Work-

book and Market Selector, a Comparative Institutional Profile, and Special Analyses.

1. BASIC REPORT

The Basic Report consists of an *Institutional Profile*, *Market Profiles*, and *User's Manual*.

The *Institutional Profile* is a confidential report consisting of two parts: an overview and details. The overview simplifies the analysis of institutional profile data by summarizing the most important market segments in those states from which the college receives the largest proportion of SAT scores.

For each of the states or regions ordered, a college will receive detailed institutional profile data for every geographic market from which the institution receives ten or more SAT scores. The data for each student-defined segment are divided into nine curricular categories that reflect students' first choices of curriculum, as reported in the Student Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ). The five institutions with which a college has the largest number of SAT-score submissions in common are named for each student segment.

The *Market Profiles* are each market's signature, detailing the student characteristics and competitive structure within each segment of that market. Divided into two parts, these profiles provide measures of market concentration and institutional competition, as well as the characteristics of SAT takers in each of the four student-defined market segments. The *Market Profiles* include: normative data; narrative description of the 1984 market structure; three-year projections of college-bound seniors; and lists of high schools, colleges, and zip codes within each geographic market.

Separate *Market Profiles* are produced for each of the College Board regions. Unlike the *Institutional Profile*, which contains confidential data about a particular institution, the *Market Profiles* are public reports. All users receive the same data for those regions they order. Copies of the *Market Profiles* can be ordered separately or with the Basic Report package.

The *User's Manual* is both a "textbook" on enrollment planning and a technical resource for how to use the *Enrollment Planning Service*. It includes a discussion of user applications, an introduction to and description of market segment methodology, a technical appendix, and a worksheet appendix to help institutions analyze their markets.

2. ELECTRONIC WORKBOOK AND MARKET SELECTOR

This feature of the new service provides a college either with tailored analyses of its own data in hard copy or with IBM microcomputer software to perform the analyses itself.

3. COMPARATIVE INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

The Comparative Institutional Profile will permit a college to compare itself with groups of other institutions whose characteristics it specifies. The college may select from such characteristics as type (two-year or four-year), size, control (public or private), cost, location, and religious affiliation. A summary profile of each group of institutions requested then can be compared to the college's own profile.

4. SPECIAL ANALYSES

During 1984 the *Enrollment Planning Service* will offer a series of Special Analyses to provide valuable information about four specific student populations: black students, Hispanic students, women students, and students interested in small colleges. Presented in a format similar to the Basic Report, all Special Analyses will contain *Market Profiles*—including a narrative report on the special market structure—and an *Institutional Profile*.

For more information, please call or write to:
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